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T H E E L O P E M E N T .

VOL. I.

G. Paul, Printer, Angel Hill, Bury St. Edmund's.

ROLAND PERCIE ;

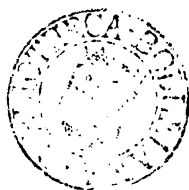
OR,

THE ELOPEMENT.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 72 MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH SQ.

1846.

1273.

THE ELOPEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT a time for hope is spring—gay smiling spring! She comes, with her bright green garb, to enliven all nature after the bleakness of winter, and the sweet songs of her warblers invite us to rejoice. It is the peculiar season of the young—the season of joyful anticipations—the summer with its varied pleasures is in prospect; the cold sterility of winter is forgotten

in this sweet, budding time ; and hope, that blessed accompanier of youth, is busy in looking forward to joys to come.

The 27th of April, in the year our tale commences, was as lovely a spring day as ever shone forth to gladden the earth ; it was a day which had been eagerly anticipated by the family at Coomcarne Park ; a day that was to bring to a happy home, a young and beloved daughter ;—the sunset of this beauteous day had come, and never did a fairer scene appear than that which welcomed the young Charlotte O'Carroll to her fatherland, after three years absence at a Parisian school ; the trees and hedges were in their fresh, spring clothing, and the extensive park, through which the avenue wound, looked like a flower-garden, so bedecked was it with cowslips and primroses, and blue-bells ; yet Charlotte, dearly as she used to love culling those sweet, hedge flowers, thought now only of reaching that home where she would

be greeted with many a fond and loving welcome. The drive through these familiar grounds seemed the longest she had ever taken, so anxious was she to reach those dear relatives, and on arriving at the house she sprang from the carriage, which conveyed her and her father, at the risk of breaking at least her leg.

“ A thousand welcomes, dearest Lotta,” exclaimed her mother who awaited her arrival at the hall door ; folding her in a long and tender embrace—and there were her brothers and sisters, her former governess, and all the old servants collected together to bid their favorite welcome. And was not Charlotte happy ? Did she think she could ever cause those beloved ones a moment’s uneasiness ? She was again at home among her childhood’s scenes, now emancipated from all school control, and blessed with fond and indulgent parents ; and she was a warm-hearted girl, devotedly attached to her family.

That night, ere she retired to rest, she devoutly thanked the Almighty Disposer of all events for having so abundantly blessed her with this world's best gifts.

The next morning dawned in summer brightness, and with many joyful anticipations of pleasure, Charlotte hastened to meet her family assembled in the breakfast-room. A play-day was willingly granted to the children, and before evening she had explored every well known haunt of her childish days; her old favorite dog, Tim, who with true canine sagacity had recognised her, was reinstalled as attendant of her rambles; her pony, grown too old for use, was caressed and fed; and Charlotte returned to join a merry dinner party, believing there was not a happier girl in Ireland.

Mr. O'Carroll, the grandfather of our heroine, was the only child of an Irish gentleman of a very-respectable Catholic family, and poor as most Roman Catholics were during the last century. He had married very young, and on

his father's death sold off the remnant he possessed of his ancestors' estates, and went with his family to reside in Spain. Here, by a series of successful speculations as a merchant, he amassed a large fortune. An epidemic fever, which raged in Madrid, where Mr. O'Carroll and his family resided, cut him off in the prime of life, and his widow did not long outlive him. Their only surviving child, Henry, was sixteen when he lost his parents, but in his guardian, Don Manuel de Solis, his father's particular friend, he found a second parent; he finished his education under his directions, lost his heart to the young and beautiful Camilla de Solis, his only child, and then was sent to travel.

After a lengthened tour through Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and France, he passed a year in Ireland, and seeing advertised for sale a large property which, in former days, had belonged to his family, he became the purchaser, repaired and enlarged the ancient dwell-

ling place, returned to Spain, asked and obtained the hand of Camilla, brought his bride to her new home, and then, blessed with every comfort, they lived in happiness surrounded by a youthful and promising family.

CHAPTER II.

MR. O'CARROLL was a man of singular amiability of character, yet possessed of every manly and honorable feeling; a fond husband, and a good father, firm in the discharge of what he thought right; yet indulgent to his children almost to a fault.

Mrs. O'Carroll had all the soft feelings of a southern, with sufficient energy to make her a most attentive wife and mother; devotedly attached to her husband and children, their

wishes were laws to her—her beauty had been famed, and her children, of which she had five, retained traces of their Spanish origin in the brightness of their dark eyes, and finely formed features.

Manuel, the eldest, was at the time this tale commences, just entering his twentieth year; he was a talented, kind-hearted young man, with a degree of indolence of character; and unfortunately for the indulgence of this disposition, his future prospects precluded the necessity of any exertion, for he was heir to his maternal grandfather's wealth.

Charlotte, the heroine of our tale, had just completed her seventeenth year; she was peculiarly her father's idol, perhaps from the very fact of her being an exact likeness of what her mother had been, when she won his young affections. She was beautiful in the strictest sense of the word, and with that true charm of beauty, a seeming unconsciousness of its possession; her features were all moulded

in perfection's mould, and her blithe and very intellectual countenance was rarely decked but in smiles; yet her feelings had all that depth and quickness, so characteristic in most Irish girls. She was sensitive, with a warmth of attachment to her friends, yet withal a little inclined to self-will: this self-will, however, would show itself in so amiable a light that one could not help loving the feeling that often prompted her to take the part of an absent friend, though that friend was in the wrong, or persisting in disbelief of the discovered imposition of a mendicant, who with a tale of sorrow had moistened her eyes. Her temper was sweet—her education had been most carefully attended to—and now, on her entering the world—a world replete with so many charms to her—she felt as if to live were indeed a pleasure. Her joyous hopes of happiness amid her home circle were about to be realised—she had no cares for the future—it was an unknown, uncared for time, the pre-

sent then sufficed her, and she felt perfectly happy.

Henry O'Carroll, Charlotte's second brother, was two years her junior, a sweet, intelligent boy, with surpassing talents, almost too precocious for his years, yet playful and innocent as a mere child. Delicacy of health made his father remove him from an English College, where he had been studying with much ardor, and where he had gained the reputation of great talent. He was Charlotte's favourite—her correspondent during her "exile," as he termed her school days, and now to be her companion in all her walks and rides.

The two youngest children were Mary and Camilla, both lively and pretty, and very fond of their governess, Miss Maldon, who had lived in the family since Charlotte was three years old. She was a quiet and unassuming person, performing her duties with affection and exactness, and rarely needing punishment for her pupils.

Coomcarne Park, the residence of this happy family, was situated near the ocean, in the neighbourhood of a large town, in the south-east of the province of Munster. The demense was very extensive, and beautifully diversified by hill and dale, and these again by woods and green fields. A river meandered through the grounds, by means of which a large lake had been formed. This was surrounded by thick woods, except at one point, where a sloping, green lawn edged its bank; the avenue wound round at this spot, and nearly at the water's brink was erected a large summer house, adorned by every variety of creeping plants. The woods had thriven surprisingly near the sea side—walks and drives had been cut through them, and nature here, liberal in her gifts, had been seconded by art in making Coomcarne Park a most delightful residence. The father loved it as the ancient territory of his family; and the children all agreed in thinking such another place could not be found in the world; even

Mrs. O'Carroll, despite the olive groves and sunshine of her native land, preferred it to any spot on earth, from the dear associations connected with it. There she had come as a bride—there she had lived as a happy wife and mother—all the improvements around had been made under her directions, and it was her home—Who does not feel what a spell there is in that sweet word?

CHAPTER III.

A month had passed quickly over Charlotte's head in the calm enjoyment of a country life, when her father's birth-day approached, and on that day it was determined to give a ball at Coomcarne, at which she should make her début in the gay world. The neighbourhood was thickly inhabited by many respectable families, and the large town of W—— was but two miles distant: being a dépôt, a regiment was always quartered,

so invitations were alone wanting to insure a good attendance. These were sent out, and very joyfully did Charlotte anticipate the pleasures of her first ball. What young girl entering life as she did, that would not feel similarly! The week before, all was gay preparations—the children's school-room, an immense, airy room, was metamorphosed into a ball room—the dining-room into a supper-room—and the drawing-room, library, and music-room, were appropriated to reception rooms.

The eventful day at length arrived, and after an early dinner Charlotte and Henry strolled out towards the green-house to gather bouquets—this they found locked.

“Ah,” exclaimed Henry, “old Peter thinks to save all his fine flowers; the like of which are not to be found on Ireland's ground,” added he, mimicking the old man's voice. “Indeed, Lotta, I saw he was greatly dismayed this morning seeing Miss Maldon and

you cutting every flower you could find in the gardens. He hopes to preserve his fine plants here I suppose from the hands of you, ruthless spoilers, but come, we have ample time, let us walk to his cottage, and get the key, for flowers I'll have."

So saying he took Charlotte's hand, and together they gained old Peter's cottage, which was near the ocean. Peter appeared to their summons, but no persuasions of Henry's could induce him to deliver the key. He would willingly go himself, and give the "sweet ladies" plenty of the best of flowers, the like of which are not to be found on Ireland's grounds.

"So my mother thinks," said Henry, "so pray, Peter, let her not be without a fine nosegay this evening, for Mrs. Cardon, who has the most beautiful flower garden in Munster, is to be here, and I fancy she'll have flowers far finer than yours."

"Finer than mine," cried old Peter indig-

nantly, "why then, Master Henry, I beg leave to differ with you ; for you see, sir, Mr. Waring, her head gardener, is noways as knowledgeable a man as I am ; and what makes fine flowers—only the knowledge of the culture like. He'd trate an inion and a Hoya Carnosa just in the same way I'm sure—the Englisher indeed ! But we'll see—we'll see whose flowers are best : " and away the old man hobbled, and Henry laughing said—

" Now, Lotta, allow I have gone the surest way to secure you the finest bouquets for the evening ; and as I have so skilfully attacked Peter's weak side for your vanity's sake, you must come round by the shore with me, it will only lengthen our walk about half a mile—you need take but a very short time to adorn your pretty person."

It was a lovely evening, and as the young ones walked along the sandy beach both seemed to enjoy the scene in silence. Henry was the first who broke it.

“Charlotte,” said he, “do you know these beautiful scenes in nature always make a feeling of sadness creep over me. I feel at times a vague dread that I shall be soon called from them—a dread, I say, for life seems so full of enjoyment, yet how often do we see the youngest, and gayest, and fairest, snatched from this earth.”

“Oh, dearest brother,” exclaimed Charlotte, “allow not these melancholy forebodings to dwell in your thoughts such an evening as this. Think only on all we have to make us happy.”

“I feel it, dear Lotta,” answered he, “and to-night you will see me the gayest of the gay.”

The tide was rising, so they hastened on, and reached the spot where they intended turning homewards—here a rustic seat had been constructed under a spreading beech tree, and Henry seated himself, declaring he felt fatigued;—Charlotte followed his example with a look

of tender anxiety at her brother's flushed cheek. The boundless ocean lay before them, decked with many a sail; from the graceful yatch, with its snowy sails and colours flying, to the dingy looking trading ship, and heavy hookers; the songs of the sailors came cheerily across the bosom of the tranquil sea, the surface of which sparkled in glassy peacefulness, except near the shore, where the swell rising broke along the beach in one long line of foam.

"I love to gaze on the tranquil ocean," said Charlotte. "I never can see it without thinking of the delight sailors must feel when a calm succeeds a dangerous storm."

"And I," exclaimed Henry, "love to look on a rough, boisterous one; it is then the ocean is seen in its majesty, and the Almighty Power that rules the winds and waves, admired and adored. Now, Lotta, mark that swell or wave approaching the beach. Do you see its

smooth surface gilded by the sun's rays? And now observe, when it rises to its full height all is dark on this side, and now it breaks, and bursting flows angrily to the shore; that is a true picture of human life, dear, the tranquil and bright time of happiness, the darkness of sorrow, and the roughness of adversity. Such is too often this world's change. Oh, my dearest sister, may your life be unchecked and unclouded by grief—" tears gathered in the young speaker's eyes.

"Henry," said Charlotte, "your low spirits are infectious—we must delay here no longer—come to where happiness awaits us in its most endearing form—we have lingered too long."

They rose and gained the green-house where old Peter had despoiled many a goodly plant and shrub of its beauteous blossoms. Charlotte made three bouquets, reserving some rose-buds and sprigs of myrtle for her father's and brothers' button holes. She then hastened

to her room, and assisted by her foster sister, Ellen Connor, who had been raised to the rank of her waiting maid, made her toilette ; and certainly never was toilette completed with less vanity and more joyous feelings.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLOTTE entered her mother's dressing-room, but this was deserted, and gaily tripping to the ball-room, there found her with Miss Maldon, busy in directing where the lights should be placed ; she presented her bouquets, and received an affectionate embrace from each, with a fond wish that this ball might be the commencement of a long and happy life,

Mrs. O'Carroll looked yet a very lovely

woman, and she gazed in silent admiration at her beautiful daughter. Charlotte was very simply attired, in white crape, and by her father's desire she wore no ornament whatever; her figure was slight, but graceful, and she moved with ease and animation.

"Lotta dear," said Mr. O'Carroll, entering the room, "you are as simply dressed as ever was pretty puritan of yore; let me try how these would look;" and he opened a small box he had in his hand, and took from it a beautiful pearl necklace, which he clasped on her neck; and fondly he kissed his darling child, wishing her many pleasant balls. "Here, Camilla," said he to Mrs. O'Carroll, "is your part of the present to our dear Charlotte," and he held out a case containing ear-rings, a brooch, and bracelets to match the necklace.

"Dear mamma," said Charlotte, "how pleased I am; and see, here are your's and my dear father's pictures fastened to these bracelets—these indeed I will value doubly—how good,

how kind of you both. I must show them to Henry," and she hastened to seek her favorite.

She found him leaving her room, where he had been seeking her, and she showed her parents' gifts.

"Give me your hand," said Henry, and she ungloved a hand and arm of exquisite symmetry, "wear this little ring for my sake," continued he, "until some one that loves you 'for better for worse' gives you another."

"I'll always wear it for your dear sake," answered she, "and I'll always love you as dearly as I do now."

"You say so now, dearest girl," replied Henry, "but a few years will prove the warmth and capaciousness of that tiny heart—come now for there's the hall-door bell ringing, let us try if there will be any one in the ball-room to-night you will bestow it upon—perhaps young Charles Cardon—or William Masterton!" and laughingly they descended together.

What a wise and kind dispensation of Provi-

dence is that which shuts the future from our eyes—very surely Charlotte would not have enjoyed this ball had she known the sad realities that awaited her after life.

The guests all quickly arrived, and it was a gay and brilliant scene. The Irish resemble the French far more than they do the English in their manners and disposition—get introduced to one of the latter, whether lady or gentleman, at a ball, and if she or he be not of a peculiarly lively character, you will find it rather difficult to thaw the reserve you encounter; to look at them sometimes in a ball-room you would fancy they had come there to show how solemn and stately they could appear amid the gayest scenes. Meet an Irish girl, or an Irish gentleman, and before you are acquainted ten minutes you will feel like an old acquaintance; not that either are forward in their manners, but their natural liveliness, the ease of their conversation, and often their native talents will amuse and please you.

Dancing commenced, and was kept up with much spirit; Charlotte was introduced to many partners, all anxious to win the favor of the young *débutant*; some even hoping to call her their own, for the sake of her fortune which was supposed to be large, for gentlemen, despite romance, will too often marry for money.

Among those that paid her the most marked attention was Charles Cardon, an only son, and considered, according to the gossips of the town of W——, a very good match. Most assiduously did he court her favor, he saw, though with a feeling of chagrin, that Charlotte's smiles were dispensed alike to all.

The announcement of supper caused general regret. In going to the supper-room Charlotte was stopped by the crowd, and near the doorway drew back to let the guests all enter before her; she was standing by Manuel when her attention was attracted by the sound of her name pronounced in a strange voice before her.

She looked, and saw two young officers, with whom she had danced, seemingly deep in conversation.

“ Well, Harvey,” said one, “ I saw you were evidently smitten by Miss O’Carroll’s charms, I watched you very attentively as you were dancing with her. What were you talking about so confidentially ?”

“ Jealous, by the Gods, I believe you are, Walhouse,” replied Harvey, “ however, be not alarmed, our ‘ sweet converse ’ ran on the Emerald Isle, which I even lauded to the skies; for I have not dwelt so long among the ‘ Wild Irish ’ as not to know how to win a fair, Irish lady’s smiles. Their devotion to their country amounts to idolatry.”

“ In praising the country, Harvey,” questioned Walhouse, “ I hope you did not forget your admiration of all its natural beauties; and then you could have thrown in some hints of the Milesian blood—the Spanish eyes, &c. It were a pity to lose the opportunity of saying something that would have made a lasting

impression. The one who first talks of love to a young girl is sure to succeed."

"Credit me," said Harvey, "these Irish girls have more depth of sense and feeling than a casual observer of their lively manners would infer. Speak to them on any rational subject, and you will find them far more conversible than our English girls—touch on flattery, or love, or any subject that a short acquaintance does not warrant, and you will find them as distant and formal as our most prudish dames. Do you remember the lines of that poet of nature, Moore? I feel as if I should like to be his countryman, when I read his, sometimes, exquisite poetry :—

" In England the garden of beauty is kept,
By a dragon of prudery, placed within call ;
But so oft this unamiable dragon has slept,
That the garden's but carelessly watch'd after all.
Oh ! they want the wild, sweet-briery fence
Which round the flowers of Erin dwells ;
Which warns the touch, while winning the sense, --
Nor charms us least, when it most repels."

“Bravo, Harvey,” exclaimed his companion. “Miss O’Carroll has certainly inspired you to-night; you are first philosophical, and secondly poetical—however, I think neither the one nor the other would secure this lady’s favour; for, believe me, the present race of young ladies will never, if they can help it, make a mere love match “*le bon vieux tems*,” for that, when my grandmother, an heiress, eloped with her husband, a penniless, younger son, like myself—”

“As it is in your family,” urged Harvey, “you ought to try your luck with this fair Charlotte. I will resign all claim on her.”

“Thank you in my sister’s name,” said Henry gaily, who had joined Charlotte at the conclusion of this conversation, “and she begs as a favour, if either of you expect even a smile from her, that you will forthwith move into supper, and there forget all the efforts she has caused you both.”

He led the way, and the young men

followed, looking rather confused. Charlotte merely treated it as a joke, yet determined if ever she married it should be for love. With regret she saw the guests depart, and she felt sorry that such pleasant hours were passed without recall.

“I shall often enjoy as gay balls,” thought she, as she retired to rest, and slept soundly, undisturbed by dreams of future ill.

CHAPTER V.

THE next two months passed very gaily to Charlotte, for all the neighbouring families that had seen her début, in her home circle, were anxious to see her enjoy herself in others, and parties followed parties. Mrs. Cardon was the first to welcome the young girl into public life:—she was an English lady, who resided near Coomcarne Park and had married Major Cardon, for the sake of having a house of her own. Her wish was to

settle in England, for her husband was wealthy, but he would not hear of such a plan ; so they came to Ardglohan, his family place, near Coomcarne, which designation on her husband's death Mrs. Cardon immediately changed into Cardon Hall. She had two children — a son, Charles Cardon, lately of age, and a daughter Amelia, some years his senior. After her husband's death she continued to reside in Ireland, for though her son inherited a small estate in England, she forfeited her jointure if she allowed him to sell or let his Irish property. She was quite a woman of the world, determined her children should be well married, and when she saw Charlotte, and knew she possessed a good fortune, she resolved no effort of hers should be wanting to win her for her son ; for this reason most anxious was she to pay Charlotte every attention.

Charles Cardon, already introduced to our readers, was like, many young men with independent fortunes, who become early their own masters, possessed of a super-excellent

opinion of himself, and firmly persuaded no young lady, whom he deigned to smile upon, could refuse the offer of his hand. He was well looking, but bearing about him an appearance of self-conceit, and affectation of manner. Educated entirely in England, he professed to condemn everything Irish; yet when he saw the young Charlotte he was forced to acknowledge to himself that though Irish, she was almost faultless. He determined to ridicule her brogue, which he persisted in saying she must have; but he found her accent and pronunciation so correct, that the very Irishisms in her speech, with her sweetly modulated voice, he could not help admiring. He fell in love then, or fancied he did so—and very many young men, we know, often mistake the fancy for the reality. In real life, when time hangs heavily on the hands of the present race of idle, indolent young men, how often do they “get up a flirtation,” as they call it, to kill time—how thoughtlessly they

trifle with a young, inexperienced girl's affections, who unless she be gifted with uncommon sense and penetration beyond her years, will mistake their nonsense for honest attachments, and too frequently give her first and best affection, where it meets no return; her first essay then of lovers proves a bitter trial; and from an artless, amiable, confiding girl, she becomes a flirt—a coquette. Oh flirting! flirting! thou art sometimes a cruel pastime—the amusement of the hour makes many kindly feelings to be forgotten, and one that thinkingly would not be guilty of an ill-natured action, sacrifices at thy shrine in thoughtless folly, many sighs, and perhaps tears!

Amelia Cardon was an imitation in manners of her brother Charles, yet with even less of feeling than he had, for women, when wordly minded, possess less feeling than men; they have the paltry passions of envy and vanity, which the very manliness of the other sex makes them seldom indulge in. Amelia was

pretty and fashionable looking, and she entered the gay world, determined it should not be her fault if she did not make a good match. Rank and riches were her ambition; but she flirted most indiscriminately with all the marriageable offices quartered in W——, and she even sometimes condescended to try and induce Manuel O'Carroll to enter the list of her admirers; but Manuel was one who cared not for a pretty face, and Henry often laughingly, observed that Manuel would never be married unless he got some kind lady to ask him, "wait" he would say "until Amelia Cardon is some years older, and she'll do the needful for you, provided always that neither Duke, Earl, nor Viscount turn up to her share in the meantime."

Mrs. Cardon called one afternoon at Coomcarne, and learning that Charlotte was very fond of music, proposed that they should have a morning concert during the ensuing week.

“Several of the officers in W—— are good musicians,” said she, “particularly Captain Harvey, and I will engage their services, you will come to us early—say one o’clock on next Tuesday—and after the concert we shall have luncheon.”

The O’Carroll’s readily consented, and Charlotte, never fancying she should be asked to play or sing, was delighted at the prospect of this concert, for she really loved music, and also she liked any little gaiety as much as any young lady of seventeen ever did.

Mrs. Cardon arranged a programme of the music, and, with a very polite note, gave it to Amelia to send to Charlotte.

Amelia on her first introduction to Charlotte had taken a dislike to her; she beheld in her a powerful rival, particularly when she found she was far her superior in musical attainments; and when her mother gave the programme of the concert to her, she resolved that, for that day at least, she would eclipse

Charlotte's performance, she burned the billet, and intended giving Charlotte the programme on her arrival at Cardon Hall, hoping her mother would be too much engaged with her numerous guests to question Charlotte about the note, which was one merely requesting she would practise some of the pieces of music, and the songs marked in the programme, as she hoped for her assistance.

The day came, and all the company punctually assembled in the large drawing-room at Cardon Hall. Charlotte was seated near Henry at a window anxiously expecting the commencement. Miss Cardon advanced towards her, and giving her a programme said,

"Of course, Miss O'Carroll, you know all this music, and we hope you will aid our humble efforts by your musical talents," saying this she hastened away to speak to some other guests.

Charlotte blushed deeply, and turning to Henry said in a low voice,

"Now, dear Henry, it is very provoking that

she should expect me to play or sing; and look, there is scarcely a piece here I know—the first I can play certainly, but not one of those Italian songs do I sing. What shall I do?"

"Take courage, sister mine," answered Henry, "Mrs. Cardon is too great a friend of yours to ask you to exhibit to disadvantage, and here she comes all smiles and bows."

"Dear Miss O'Carroll," said Mrs. Cardon, taking her hand very kindly, "I know I can trust to your kindness, so will you allow me to conduct you to the musicians. Or perhaps your brother will accompany you—you see they are preparing to commence, and we trust you will not think it a trouble to gratify us."

"Indeed, Mrs. Cardon," replied Charlotte rising, "I shall be very happy if I am able to oblige you, but in this programme there are only two pieces I know at all, the first and last but one; these of course I will play with pleasure, if you please, but if you would allow me to listen I should be delighted."

"Only know two pieces," exclaimed Mrs. Cardon, "surely, dear Miss O'Carroll, with your musical talents you had ample leisure since Friday last to learn all. I sent you the programme then."

"I did not get it, I assure you," said Charlotte.

"Some mistake then must have occurred," answered Mrs. Cardon, the truth flashing on her mind, for she knew her daughter well, but she was too discreet to hint at it. "However, my dear girl," added she, "you will play those pieces you do know, and perhaps by and by favor us with one of your exquisite Irish melodies."

Charlotte rose and followed Mrs. Cardon towards the end of the room, where, round the piano and harp, were assembled the performers.

"Miss O'Carroll can play this overture, Amelia," said her mother to her in rather a low voice, "and another piece too—and then she will sing one of her native melodies instead

of those Italian songs, and I hope she will far surpass you," added she in a whisper.

Amelia threw back her head with a slight sneer, and sat down to the piano—Charles Cardon arranged the harp for Charlotte—and, taking up his flute, the concert commenced. A very great contrast certainly existed between those two girls—Amelia was most fashionably dressed, and sat at the piano with a most self-satisfied air—Charlotte was very simply attired in white, she had taken off her bonnet, and her long curls half shadowed her very beautiful face, her eyes were fixed on the harp, and she seemed very timid, but soon her musical taste made her forget it, and she played with exquisite skill and feeling. Amelia rose from the piano with annoyance.

At Mrs. Cardon's request Charlotte, joined by Henry, sang that beautiful song of Moore's, "on music" arranged in the melodies, their voices were sweet and accorded well; they both sang with thrilling pathos, and retired to their seats amid the loudest plaudits.

Amelia's best and finest Italian songs were almost unheeded after the beautiful Irish girl's melody, but Charlotte was relieved and delighted when she found herself again at home; whilst Amelia felt how unsuccessful her plan had been, and in her brother's praises of Charlotte's performance was continually reminded of her own failure.

CHAPTER VI

DURING an evening ramble through Coomcarne Park, after dinner on this day, Henry proposed to his mother that she should get up some *fête* for the next week.

"You know, dear mother," said he, "I must be off to college next month, as I am so robust now. Let us have something gay before I go, for decidedly a morning concert is not very pleasant."

"I am most willing, dear boy," replied his

mother, "to gratify you, and I am certain so is your father. Are you not, Henry?" asked she of her husband, on whose arm she was leaning.

"Indeed, love, I am," said Mr. O'Carroll, "but suppose we give our consent, and let the young people arrange it as they please—let Lotta be the queen of the feast, and Manuel and Henry be her stewards, what say you, darlings?"

"Oh, father," answered Henry, "it would be just the thing, and if we get up something very pleasant we will invite you; and I propose we do not let you know until two days before; we can send all our invitations then, for formal, long invitations are detestable."

"Do as you please, dear children," said Mr. O'Carroll, "and I think if you all went now and held a consultation together in the summer-house it would be your very best movement,—we will not be curious."

Away bounded Henry, followed by Charlotte and Manuel, to the summer-house, where

they conversed a long time together ; and when they came back not one word could their father extract from them relating to their plans, except a conditional promise of hearing something very important on the following Saturday.

“Remember, I will pay all the expenses, of this entertainment, my little queen,” said Mr. O’Carroll, wishing Charlotte good night, “and take my advice—have it as soon, as possible, for delays are dangerous.”

“And recollect, Lotta, that you can give any directions you please to the housekeeper,” added her mother, “and I promise not to know anything about it.”

“Where are you going so early?” asked Mr. O’Carroll of Charlotte, whom he met next morning, immediately after breakfast, in her riding habit.

“That is a secret, dear father,” replied she laughing, as she joined her brothers, who

were waiting below stairs for her, and very gaily they all cantered off.

Their destination was a beautiful glen, about two miles distant from Coomcarne Park, near which Charlotte's nurse had a very comfortable farm-house. The country was peculiarly wild round the glen, when it suddenly changed, and a spot of great fertility succeeded the barrenness. This oasis in the desert was entered by an old, ivy-clad bridge, which crossed a large and rapid river. The road wound round by the river's edge, and on one side of it was a steep ascent, thickly wooded with magnificent oak and ash, holly and birch; the varied tints of which contrasted beautifully with each other; with, here and there a fantastically shaped rock clothed with ivy and many coloured saxifrages, varying the scene; while at the other side of the noisy stream were occasional green patches, sloping towards the river, and beyond these the woods rose on a gradual ascent, which

formed the second side of the glen. The young equestrians quietly pursued their way through this romantic pass, with only occasional exclamations on its beauties. They had passed about half a mile through it when they reached nurse Connor's house ; situated on the mill side, and before it a grassy bank sloped towards the river—here they alighted, and after refreshing themselves with a draught of milk, proceeded, led by Henry, a few hundred yards from the cottage, to the spot they had come to visit. It was a small green open to the river in front, and surrounded on the other sides by thick woods, whilst, scattered on its surface, large oak trees spread their branches, and shaded the spot.

“ Will not this suit us exactly ?” asked Henry. “ Under those beautiful trees our tables shall be spread.”

“ It is indeed a lovely spot,” said Charlotte, “ and the river has such a refreshing sound tumbling over those rocks.”

"I never saw a place better chosen," observed Manuel. "I give you infinite credit, Henry, for remembering its beauties."

"Trust me, brother," replied Henry, "for having the organ of locality strongly developed. Come, let us consult nurse Connor about tables and chairs, and benches; and we must not forget the barn for dancing in if it should rain. We will defy the elements, though they should throw a *damp* on our enjoyments."

Nurse Connor and her family were delighted to be of any service, and Henry, who seemed the most active, gave every necessary direction. The barn was a very large, boarded room; this was to be cleared and well cleaned, and decorated with flowers and evergreens. These arrangements made the gay young party return to a late dinner in high spirits.

After this Charlotte held a long consultation with the housekeeper—the invitations were all written and sent—many rides taken to the glen—and the expected day came in summer

brightness. They were to have a cold dinner on the green-sward, and dancing after; then tea, and dancing and refreshments in the barn, until the guests were tired. Musicians, the best W—— afforded, were hired, and after a very early breakfast Charlotte, Manuel, and Henry drove away to see that all the preparations were complete. Mrs. O'Carroll, her husband, Miss Maldon, and the children were to follow, to be there to receive the guests.

The morning was a lovely, cloudless one, with a gentle breeze, and Henry, as they drove along, declared—

“If they had bespoken the day, it could not be finer.”

The tables were all laid under the trees, the trunks of which Charlotte and her brothers adorned with garlands of many colored heaths, the beautiful red berries of the mountain ash, and the bright yellow blossoms of the broom. The barn, or the ball-room as they called it,

was nearer, than the house, to the spot where the tables were spread, and by the edge of the river. Round it, inside, were ranged benches, and its walls were covered with green boughs; lamps were fixed in several places, and a temporary fire-place arranged in case the evening should prove chilly.

Mr. O'Carroll was delighted with all the arrangements, and the children ran about in ecstasies of pleasure at the gaiety and novelty of the scene.

At three o'clock the guests began to arrive, having been invited to come early. First the Mastertons, three young men, and two young ladies, all good-natured, and gay young people. Alice, the eldest daughter, a fair, timid girl, had been always a great friend of Charlotte's; they were people possessing a very small fortune, but highly respectable, and greatly esteemed by all the O'Carroll family. The Cardons came next, and with them a young nobleman, a col-

lege friend of Charles Cardon's, to whom Amelia paid great attention, but who seemed so wrapt up in himself, as to be insensible to her devotions—there were besides several belles and beaux from W——, with all the officers quartered there, and among them, Captain Harvey and Mr. Walhouse, both agreeable young men. Mrs. O'Carroll proposed to the young people to take a stroll before dinner, which was not ordered until five o'clock, to which they all readily assented.

“Will not you join the ramblers, Lord Mandorne?” asked she of Charles's friend, as he seated himself under a tree, when the other young people were moving off. “There is a very pretty waterfall a short distance up the glen?”

“Thank you—no—” he replied, “I am no admirer of Irish scenes.”

“Nor I either,” said Amelia, “and the day is so hot too,” and she seated herself—“here,

Lord Mandorne, I shall rest here — pray do not let me detain you, Mrs. O'Carroll," added she ; and Mrs. O'Carroll, determined every one should enjoy themselves—took her husband's arm and sauntered after the merry group in advance. The company had separated into small parties —there was Charlotte and Henry, with Miss Masterton leaning on Manuel, and Charles Cardon walking by Charlotte. The parents had marked the young man's attentions, and Mr. O'Carroll observed to his wife —

“ You must know, Camilla, I begin to fear our Lotta really likes Charles Cardon ; certainly in point of fortune he is a good match enough, but then his disposition is not amiable, and their religions too, differ—God knows I am no bigot, and I respect the good of every religion, thinking all worship the same Deity, with the same hope of Salvation, though under different forms. In a married life, husband and wife should be one in every thought, and on

this score, I object to mixed marriages—but did our child really love one differing in religion, I would consent to her marriage with him, for I can judge how I should have felt had I been prevented marrying my ‘first love.’ Dear Camilla, do you think she loves Charles Cardon?”

“Indeed, Henry,” she replied, “I do not—I have no fears on that head—Charlotte is too acute an observer not to see through the cold selfishness of his character, and too warm-hearted a girl to love him—she may like him well enough as an acquaintance, and nothing more. When Lotta marries, I hope she will get such a husband as her mother obtained, for she is one to love deeply and devotedly, but she must be loved in return.”

Every point of beauty about the glen was admired, and each returned to dinner seemingly pleased; even the apathetic Charles was obliged to confess that the scene, though

Irish, was a lovely one. And Charlotte, how did she feel—why, completely happy—there she was surrounded by her friends, without an unkind feeling towards one around her. The dinner passed off amid great merriment. Lord Mandorne alone seemed to feel no enjoyment, but in eating—a sneering smile or a monosyllable was all he deigned in reply to Amelia's attempt to draw him into conversation. Henry O'Carroll was seated near them and amused the Mastertons highly by an exact imitation of the young lord's insouciance. Toasts were given and replied to with that ready wit, so often enlivening such parties, and after a sufficient rest, dancing was commenced under the trees on the smooth greensward. Lord Mandorne danced but once, and then with Charlotte. Tea was served up in the ball-room, after which dancing was again resumed and kept up with great spirit until an early hour in the morning; when all returned home, by the beautiful, break-

ing day, much pleased with their day's and night's amusement, except Amelia, who could scarcely conceal her vexation, at the undisguised admiration Charlotte excited. What a hateful and baneful passion is envy—it destroys enjoyment and embitters life.

CHAPTER VII.

NEXT morning, before Charlotte had risen, Ellen entered her room with a note, which she said had been left by a messenger from Cardon Hall, but which required no answer. Charlotte hastily opened, read it, and blushed deeply—it was from Charles Cardon. She quickly finished her toilette, and sitting down re-read the note. It was a very simple and common-place one, merely requesting as a

favour that Miss O'Carroll would allow him to be her escort during her usual afternoon ride; her brothers she knew were to be engaged at a coursing party with the Mastertons, and she thought if she rode out, as she did nearly every day, Charles and she would be *tête-à-tête*.

"I will not ride to-day," was her instant determination, "why need he have written, he might have joined me as he has done so often before," thought she—"can he mean to say anything particular—yesterday he was too attentive to me?" And she sat pondering with very girlish perplexity—till her reverie was broken by the entrance of her little sisters.

"Mamma is in the breakfast-room, Lotta," said Mary, "and she sent us to call you down."

"Oh! Sissy," lisped little Camilla, "it is just one o'clock, and we never breakfasted so late before, and Miss Maldon will let us play all the rest of the day. Oh I wish we had a party in the glen every day."

“ And I should not, Cammie,” said Mary very sedately, “ for then we should grow up ignorant and idle girls.”

“ Well, Lotta,” said her mother on her entering the breakfast-room, “ was not yesterday’s a very pleasant fête? But you look pale and tired ; a nice ride on horseback however will refresh you, though you must be satisfied with a groom’s attendance, as even your father has gone to this coursing party.”

“ Indeed, mamma, I can give it up for one day, and take a nice, quiet drive with you.”

“ You must do no such thing, my dear Lotta,” replied her mother, “ for I know you prefer riding to driving, and besides I am much too fatigued to-day to stir out of doors.”

The meal was a cheerful one, and loitered over more than an hour ; as they were all lazily rising from it, Charles Cardon entered, and he remarked with pleasure Charlotte’s confusion in wishing him a good morning. By

her mother's wish she accepted his offered services of, escort during her ride, and truth be told she was not sorry to have her sanction for doing so.

Mrs. O'Carroll noticed with regret Charlotte's confusion, but she dearly loved her child. She knew her right sense and depth of feeling, and she deemed it better she should learn the truth of Charles's admiration from himself, and then act for herself. Charlotte never mounted her horse with such a feeling of timidity, but her companion soon put her quite at ease, by talking easily and cheerfully on the common subjects of conversation. Who has not found a ride on horseback, through a fine country, on a beautiful day, exhilarate the spirits; and Charlotte was the gayest and happiest minded of mortals. They had turned towards Coomcarne Park, and were riding leisurely along the sea shore, when Charles suddenly reined in his horse, and hesitatingly

confessed, the object of his riding with her that day was to tell her he loved her.

Poor Charlotte—it was the first declaration of the kind she had heard, and she felt confounded. She tried to say something, but failed ; Charles saw her confusion, and vehemently declared how dear she was to him—how fondly he soon hoped to call her his wife. Charlotte summoned up all her courage, and in a faltering voice, thanked him for his good opinion, but assured him she never could be more than a friend to him.

“ Then I have been most blameably foolish in allowing myself to hope there could be anything more than friendship between us, Miss O’Carroll,” replied he impetuously, and the sneering tone of his voice did not escape Charlotte’s observation. “ May I ask if a prior claim on your affections has caused me this cold refusal?”

“ Mr. Cardon,” said Charlotte, “ you have no right to ask me this.” She glanced at him,

he was pale, and looked agitated, and her womanly feelings prompted a kinder reply, and she added—"I assure you my affections are not engaged—they have not been sought—you know I am yet young and inexperienced, and if I have been the cause of giving you pain, believe me it was unwittingly. Let us be friends, but nothing more—we should not suit each other."

They rode on in silence, and on entering the avenue at Coomcarne Park, Mr. Cardon asked Charlotte, in a subdued, cold voice, if he might write once to her, and she assented.

What woman with a kind feeling at her heart, does not feel a something almost amounting to liking towards the man who first tells her he loves her—she may be sought and won by the rich and noble, and she may either marry for love, or marry to better her condition in life, or she may not marry at all, and still her first proposal will be remembered, and its proposer kindly thought of.

Mr. Cardon assisted Charlotte to dismount—bowed a stiff farewell, and when next they met how different were their positions. The next day's post brought Charlotte his letter. It contained chiefly reproaches for encouraging his addresses, but renewing his proposal—Charlotte's reply, dictated by her mother, was sensible and ladylike, declining his offer. Charles departed the following week for England, and married at Brighton, in a few months, the wealthy widow of an Earl, who having espoused her first husband for his rank and riches, married her second for love, and went to reside on the continent.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE autumn commenced in richness and beauty, and Henry, who had apparently quite recovered his health, was preparing to return to his college, when Mr. O'Carroll received a letter from Madrid, informing him of his father-in-law's death, and conveying his dying request that Mr. O'Carroll and Manuel would immediately proceed to Spain, and arrange his affairs. Mrs. O'Carroll so

deeply mourned her father's death that her health suffered, and by the advice of physicians change of air was determined on. To Exmouth therefore, all the family went, and when Mr. O'Carroll saw them comfortably settled there, he and Manuel proceeded to London, and from thence to Madrid.

Henry's departure for college was put off until their return, and by his fond attentions to his mother, he made her feel less the loss of her husband.

They had a large house, with a pretty garden, facing the sea, and lived for the first three months in quiet retirement. Charlotte and Henry daily rode out together; during which they frequently met an elderly and delicate lady, driving or walking, and always attended by one or two young men, both extremely good looking; they remarked their assiduous attention to this lady, whom they concluded to be their mother, and they admired them for it.

One afternoon Henry hired a boat, and promising to take very good care of Mary and Camilla, and Charlotte, took them a boating excursion up the Exe; he prevailed on Charlotte to take her guitar, to which she sang some very pretty Spanish airs, taught her by her mother, and to which he generally sang second; they for some time observed a small boat closely following them, rowed by two young men. Charlotte and Henry had just ceased singing a beautiful Spanish duet, when their pursuers, as they appeared to be, commenced a song which they sang very prettily together.

Charlotte was delighted, and Henry bade their boatmen rest on their oars, the young men too ceased pulling, and both boats floated on gently with the rising tide. Their song ended, Henry urged on his men, for it was getting late, and he wished to show Charlotte a particular point of view on the river, before they returned to Exmouth.

The young men, anxious to keep near their boat, raised a lug sail, which nearly proved fatal to them, for a sudden squall upset their boat, and both young men were precipitated into the water; both sank, and their boat was quickly drifted away. Henry did not lose his presence of mind.

“ Oh save them,” exclaimed Charlotte.

The sailor who was at the helm turned the boat. Henry was an excellent swimmer—he threw off his coat, and before any one knew what he was about he jumped into the water; both young men were struggling in the stream; one seemed to know how to swim, but he was encumbered by a large coat; the sailors held an oar to him, and brought him into the boat, and Henry, with manly effort, succeeded in rescuing the other from drowning, and hauled him almost insensible to the shore; those in the boat were glad to land, and fortunately a small cottage was near the water’s edge, to which Charlotte with her two frightened little

sisters hastened, and prepared its inmates for the arrival of the young men, who were assisted to it by Henry and the boatmen. A cheerful fire was blazing, by the warmth of which they were both soon restored to consciousness.

“Lotta,” said Henry, approaching her as she sat in a window with her two little sisters, “do not you recognise these young men—they are the constant attendants of that delicate lady; how fortunate we have been in rescuing them; but, dearest sister, you look as pale and nervous as if you too had been immersed in the briny waters,” and he laughingly shook his wet clothes.

“Indeed, Henry, it is now I feel frightened, when I saw all in the water, I was surprised at myself, I felt so completely stunned, but now I shudder at the danger,” and she trembled violently. “Will not you though dry your clothes, dearest brother—remember your cough of last year. The children and I will walk in the garden, and wait until you are all ready,

and make haste, for you know we shall be anxiously expected by mamma."

"Do then, Lotta, and when we are dry and 'presentable,' as old Peter would say, I'll manage the introductions; and now go and recover your bloom, or you have no chance of winning the hearts of those unknown—why the bloom has returned, ah! sister mine, take care."

Charlotte quitted the room and wandered in a small, pretty garden for nearly an hour—at least it seemed an hour to her.

When Henry at length joined her, he told her "he liked their new acquaintances greatly, particularly the youngest," added he, "but here they come, and I'll introduce you, Lotta," and he did so in a very graceful manner.

"We must introduce ourselves, Roland," said the eldest young man with a smile, "this is my brother, Roland Percie, Miss O'Carroll."

"And this is my eldest brother, Barton Percie," laughingly added the youngest. "And

we feel very happy," said both, "at the chance acquaintance."

"It is one I have long wished for, Miss O'Carroll," observed Roland Percie in a low voice, as he handed Charlotte to the boat. "We have met many times."

A deep blush was her sole reply. The tide was now going out, and their row back to Exmouth was a very quick and a very agreeable one. They landed near the O'Carroll's house, and Henry pressed the Percies very much to wait and dine with them—but they refused, saying, their father and mother would be uneasy if they were so long absent.

"Bad news spreads so quickly," said Roland Percie, "that they may hear of our danger, and not hear the truth—so we had better go and show ourselves."

"If you will return and take tea with us," replied Henry, "I promise you a welcome from my mother and sister," and he glanced at Charlotte.

“ We shall be very happy to come,” said both young men, and thanking Henry very gratefully for his timely aid, they bowed to Charlotte, shook hands with the children, and walked away.

At nine o'clock the Percies returned, accompanied by their father, an elderly gentleman of most pleasing manner, who said he could not delay coming to thank Henry for his generous exertions in saving his sons' lives.

“ If you knew how dear they are to me,” said he, “ you would then know what a favor you have conferred — one I never, never shall forget.”

Mrs. O'Carroll received her guests very politely, and a feeling of mutual pleasure sprung up between the O'Carrolls and Percies at this acquaintance. Mr. Percie's good-humoured drollery quite won upon Henry and Charlotte, and both pronounced him to be a most agreeable man; and so he was; to a happy flow of spirits he added a sense and cleverness

of conversation; the children were delighted with him, particularly little Camilla, who told him in a whisper, "he was very like her own dear, dear papa," and even Miss Maldon, rather fastidious, declared him to be "a most plessant companion." Mr. Percie in wishing good night, said—

He hoped they should improve this chance acquaintance, "we ought to have met before, and we should have done so, I am sure, if I had been staying at Exmouth as my boys have been; but, Madam, I only joined my family two days ago," added he addressing Mrs. O'Carroll, "so we must now make up for lost time—good night—" and they retired leaving their new acquaintance greatly prepossessed in their favor.

CHAPTER IX

THE next day, at an unfashionably early hour, Mr. and Mrs. Percie, with their sons, called and were received by Mrs. O'Carroll. Henry was engaged reading in his own room, and Charlotte was singing in a small music-room, which adjoined the drawing-room, quite unconscious of the arrival of any visitors. Mrs. Percie apologised for this early visit, but said she was so anxious to express to young Mr. O'Carroll her grateful feelings for his conduct

towards her boys—that she feared if she put it off, he would not be at home. Mrs. O'Carroll said he was in his own room, and rose to ring the bell—just then the sweet sound of Charlotte's voice reached the visitors' ears through the closed doors, and her mother advanced to tell her of their arrival, when Mr. Percie interfered, and begged they might be allowed the pleasure of hearing her song finished.

“For my boys,” said he, “speak in raptures of her voice; it was near proving a fatal one to them.” He then advanced, and gently opened the door of the music-room; they listened in silence; Charlotte sang with her guitar the little Spanish song of the evening before; she was seated near the window, with her back to the door, and she warbled on with all the perfection of her really beautiful voice, and one of the company at least thought he had never heard such a voice before. She ceased, and Mr. Percie entered the room say-

ing—"We have been taking an unfair advantage of you, Miss O'Carroll, and feasting our ears on your melody. I am not surprised it allured my sons into danger."

Charlotte's frightened start was highly amusing, she looked round as if meditating an escape, but Mr. Percie gaily took her hand and led her out to Mrs. Percie, her sweet, intelligent face suffused with blushes.

"Here, Mrs. Percie," said he, "is the syren, that nearly deprived us of our boys—but she proved more merciful than the syrens of old—she charmed them, it is true, with the sweetness of her voice—she allowed them to be saved from a watery grave, neither shrieking nor lamenting as most young ladies would do, but acting with common sense; and here she is now, promising to be very good friends with them for the future, and with their father and mother too."

Charlotte took Mrs. Percie's offered hand,

and gracefully replied to her kind wishes. Henry now entered and all engaged in cheerful conversation.

After an hour's pleasant chat, Mr. Percie rose and reminded his wife that her usual hour for driving had come, "I intend to prevail on those young people to join me in a walk, and perhaps you will induce Mrs. O'Carroll to take a quiet drive with you. Do, dear Madam," he added, "and I will take care of your children—it will even be an act of charity towards Mrs. Percie, for I plainly perceive she has no chance of her usual escorts, Barton and Roland, to-day."

"I shall be very happy," replied Mrs. O'Carroll, "if you all first join us to luncheon," and she led the way to the dining room where the repast was laid; here a half-hour was passed very agreeably, and then Mrs. Percie and Mrs. O'Carroll drove away, and Mr. Percie, with the young people set off on a ramble.

"Where shall we walk, boys," asked Mr.

Percie of his sons, "for this promenading up and down a terrace, though it may be very pleasant for belles and beaux, is not agreeable to my taste."

"You ought to consult the lady, father," replied Roland Percie.

"So I ought, indeed, Roland—what an ungallant old man I am; but will you excuse me, Miss O'Carroll? and now lead the way, and we, your humble slaves, will follow."

"Have you been to the Beacon Hill, Mr. Percie?" she enquired.

"No, I have not," he said, "so come, and as it is to be up a hill, you must take my arm."

"Oh," answered Charlotte laughing, "you forget I am 'a wild Irish girl,' accustomed to the rugged hills and pathways of my native land, and therefore quite too independent to take any assistance in walking up a hill like this, it would be very difficult to tire me; besides I have been fifty times up this walk

with Henry—it commands a very lovely view extending from Buryhead up to Exeter.”

Mr. Percie and Charlotte walked on a little in advance of the rest of the party.

“That song of yours, Miss O’Carroll, is a sweet one,” said Mr. Percie, “the soft Spanish goes so well to that beautiful air.”

“It was my dear father’s favorite song,” replied Charlotte, “I used to sing it every evening for him.”

Mr. Percie looked at her mourning dress, and she understood the look, and with her own peculiar *naïveté* told how they were circumstanced. Mr. Percie thanked her repeatedly, and said—

“Now, my dear Miss Carroll, though I am sure you have none of that ladylike failing of curiosity, I must tell you who I am. My father had four sons, and I being the youngest entered the church, married Mrs. Percie, and we have those two fine sons. My vicarage is in this county, about twenty miles from this place, it

is a sweet spot ; you must all come then before you return to Ireland, and Barton and Roland will show you all the curiosities, from their pet monkey, Jacko, to the ruins of an old Abbey near us. Come hither, Roland," he added, to his youngest, and evidently favorite, son. " Will you promise to be very polite and attentive to Miss O'Carroll, if she should ever honor Marthorpe Vicarage with a visit ?"

" Certainly, you may rely on it I will," said Roland, joining Charlotte with a very pleased look.

They walked on together talking merrily, till they reached the summit of Beacon Hill.

" This certainly is a lovely view," said Mr. Percie, " have you anything like this in your country, Miss O'Carroll ?"

" Many like it surely," she replied, " and oh ! others far, far superior. I wish you had seen our beautiful Ireland. Henry, would

not Mr. Percie admire our mountains, and lakes, and glens?"

"And your bogs, and your mud cabins, and the system of domestic economy practised in them—pigs and children all feeding together, aye, Miss O'Carroll?" asked Barton Percie.

Charlotte looked at the speaker, and a tear gathered in her brilliant eye, she hesitated—

"Pardon him, Miss O'Carroll," said his father, "he is an ignorant fellow."

Henry and Roland were a short distance off.

"I only hope, Mr. Percie," replied Charlotte, "that Mr. Barton Percie may soon gain a true knowledge of Ireland, not from books, but from personal observation, for through that medium alone can my well abused countrymen be truly judged; and I hope too," she added with a sweet smile, "that he will allow us the pleasure of proving to him that bogs afford us a cheerful fire; and that though they may partly disfigure our island, still, if all of it were as beautiful, as it is in parts, where would

be that variety that makes its best charm?

And more than this, I will undertake to make him acknowledge in our poorest mud cabins he will find some whose honesty and amiability would adorn a palace; the pigs may share, with the hungry children, their poor meal of potatoes, but let him, a stranger, enter that lowly shed, and, if he be so disposed, the best of that humble fare is his with a warm welcome, without the smallest remuneration." And Charlotte looked up proudly.

"I really did not know you were so enthusiastic about your country, Miss O'Carroll," said Barton, or I should have taken care not to offend you. I am sure you might abuse England for ever, and it would give me no concern."

"You did not offend me I assure you," answered Charlotte, and I shall not take revenge by abusing your country, for I like it excessively, from the little I have seen. Had

we not better turn homewards, Mr. Percie," said she turning to him ?

"Come then, my fair Irish lassie," said Mr. Percie, taking her hand, "we will move, and Barton, my boy, let Beacon Hill remind you that if you wish to gain an Irish lady's good opinion, you are not to begin by abusing her country—Miss O'Carroll I should be proud of you for a countrywoman."

Henry and Roland now advanced, and Mr. Percie gaily recounted the dispute between Charlotte and Barton. They reached home soon after Mrs. O'Carroll's return ; and Mr. Percie observing a vase of flowers, said he wished they might steal one or two for Mrs. Percie, for she was passionately fond of flowers.

"These are scarcely worth offering," answered Charlotte, "you see they are only common flowers, but if you come to our garden, we may be able to choose a better bouquet."

“ Will not you give me a peace offering, Miss O’Carroll,” asked Barton Percie, when she was pulling some flowers?”

“ Yes,” replied Charlotte, and she plucked a small sprig of garden heath—“ this you see is not the mountain heath, Mr. Barton Percie ; I would give you the latter if I had it, for I prefer the flowers that remind me of my dear Ireland, of its very bogs even, to any others, and she playfully presented it, and turned to finish her nosegay.

“ I shall be positively jealous, Miss O’Carroll, of my brother, if you do not give me too a little flower,” said Roland.

“ What shall it be then ?” asked Charlotte.

“ I would value a blade of grass touched by you,” he answered.

And Charlotte stooped picked a sprig from a herb which grew near her, and gave it to him.

“ Do you know what this little herb is,” he asked, as he took it. “ It is called canary

grass, and in the floral language means 'perseverance,' and persevere I will even to try and deserve a smile from you—more I dare not say now."

Charlotte joined the rest of the party, and presented her bouquet to Mr. Percie, who thanked her; and each parted much pleased with their new acquaintances.

CHAPTER X.

MR. PERCIE was, as he related, the fourth son of an English gentleman, who married young a beautiful, but penniless cousin, entered the church, obtained a very good living, and spent his life in happiness and comfort; loved by all his neighbours, as well for his strict attention to his religious duties, as for his devotion to his children, and his amiable and gay manner.

Barton, his elder son, was just twenty-four, and was studying for the bar; he was a well-mannered, genteel looking young man, a little inclined to be satirical, yet despite this amiably disposed. Roland, his brother, was two years his junior, and was a singularly handsome young man, his person was tall and very slight, but elegantly formed; his features were all perfect; his deep blue eyes, and light hair, with his almost girlishly fair complexion, might have given him an effeminate look, but his air was very manly, his countenance open, with such a smile as once seen could not be forgotten. His was indeed a beautiful face, such a one as is rarely met with, as if to show what nature can do when in a kindly mood. Such a one as you might gaze on with pleasure and never cease to recollect.

He was a lieutenant in a regiment of foot, now on a six months' leave of absence.

Mrs. Percie, their mother, seemed to idolise her children and most devoted sons they proved

themselves. Her health was delicate, and she had removed to Exmouth, while her husband remained at his vicarage attending to his pastoral duties; for one month he had left them to join his family, and during that month not a day passed that they and the O'Carrolls did not pass some part of it together; indeed the young people seemed inseparable. Henry felt quite attached to the Percies, and Charlotte often thought when quite alone, on Roland's wonderful superiority to Charles Cardon; it was a dangerous thought to dwell on, and yet she could not help doing so. During her rides and walks he was always her escort. Mrs. O'Carroll never thought of making any remark on his attentions; she had been delighted, for her children's sakes, to cultivate these agreeable acquaintances, and Mrs. Percie's motherly love quite won her heart.

Some few evenings before the Percies' intended departure for their home, the O'Carrolls were taking tea with them—it was then the com-

mencement of December—Mr. and Mrs. Percie, in wishing good night, said they had a request to make of Mrs. O'Carroll, which they trusted she would grant—

“It is,” said Mrs. Percie, that you will all come to Marthorpe Vicarage for the Christmas—there, dear Mrs. O'Carroll, you shall be as quiet as you please.”

“And Henry,” added Mr. Percie, “will have some good sport shooting with our boys, and Miss Charlotte will have a companion she will like greatly in our niece, Emma Leslie. Now don't refuse us pray—remember what we owe you—our Vicarage is large, too large indeed; so I look on it as settled you will all come to us.”

And Mrs. O'Carroll yielded a graceful assent—her health had quite recovered its wonted strength, and her spirits their usual tone, and she dearly wished to see her children enjoy themselves.

The night before the Percies left Exmouth

was spent with their friends the O'Carrolls, and Henry proposed to Charlotte that they should all play round games, as Mrs. O'Carroll did not wish to see dancing so soon after her father's death. The young people, joined by Mr. Percie and Miss Maldon, sat in a circle; the chosen play was slip-the-ring. Henry had a pretty little ring, with Charlotte's hair in it, which she had brought him from Paris, and this he gave, cautioning all to take care of it, as it contained Charlotte's hair. The play proceeded in all fun and frolic, Mr. Percie always giving the ring to Charlotte, and asking Roland. At length a sufficient number of forfeits were gained—it came to Charlotte's turn to release her forfeit; this she was to do by going into the other room, and singing a song, and remaining there until some one went and released her. In a sweet, playful manner she sat down and sang one of her own beautiful Irish melodies, and before it was ended all the players had surrounded

her. She then claimed her privilege of getting a song, and Mr. Percie sang for her, with much feeling, an old Scotch ballad ; this was followed by songs from all the others, and the night was far advanced when they went to supper. Charlotte found herself next Roland Percie, and why did she blush so deeply when he showed her Henry's ring, and then slipped it into his waistcoat pocket. Her abstraction was noticed by Mr. Percie, who laughingly bid her good night, adding in a whisper—

“ My dear girl, if I were in your place, I'd be desperately in love with my son Roland.”

And when she sat musing by her fireside, she was forced to acknowledge to herself that she did love him better than Henry—her own dear brother—ah ! no—but nearly as well ; and she dreamed all night of the one to whom she had given wholly and entirely her guileless heart. And Roland was certainly fitted to captivate a young girl's love ; he had been her

constant companion for a month—he seemed to love her too—his manner had told her so many times, and we know there is something very infectious in love.

The next day the Percies left, and how did Charlotte feel that afternoon when she strolled with Henry by their dwelling; they entered it, there was a small vase of flowers—flowers she had seen Roland pluck some days before; they were scentless, winter flowers, yet Charlotte thought one she stole from among them had a rare perfume. A long, delightful letter from their dear father that evening cheered their home circle; he hoped to be with them early in spring, he spoke of his father-in-law's generosity with grateful affection. Manuel was now the possessor of his large fortune, but like his father he wished to settle in Ireland; and selling his property caused a delay. To Charlotte, as his god-daughter, her grandfather, left £5,000, to be paid on the day of her marriage, for marriage ornaments as he

said, or when she completed her twenty-first year, if not married.

Mrs. O'Carroll retired to rest with a feeling of joy at her husband's promised return, but to shed some filial tears to think the father she had loved so dearly was gone for ever. Oh! for ever—for ever! it is a sad, sad sound to dwell upon; the young repeat it and forget it, but the old feel its truth!

CHAPTER XI.

THE festive Christmas season approached in frost and snow, at which Henry rejoiced, as he expected much amusement from shooting and skating, and Charlotte in secret regretted, for she knew it would deprive her of many hours of Roland's society. What a selfish turn love will give the most amiable disposition; if any one had told her some weeks previous that she would have thought of her own gratification

before Henry's, she would not have believed it possible, yet now she felt, that dearly as she loved that brother, his feelings had become a secondary consideration with her.

On Christmas eve the O'Carrolls left Exmouth for Marthorpe Vicarage, which they reached only in time for a late dinner.

Mr. and Mrs. Percie welcomed them with a warmth that made them feel quite at home, and the young men seemed very anxious to show they were welcome guests.

"This is indeed the happiest moment of my life, Miss O'Carroll," whispered Roland, as Charlotte followed her mother up stairs before dinner. "I wish you could feel how I have longed for it."

A smile and a bright blush was her sole reply.

On descending to the drawing room, the O'Carrolls found, in addition to the family, a Mr. Edward Percie, a brother of the Vicar's, with his wife, and a little boy; a Master

and Miss Leslie, a nephew and niece of Mrs. Percie's, the former about Henry's age, and the latter about twenty. The house was large and very comfortably furnished, there dwelt an air of peace and comfort around, and Charlotte thought an indescribable charm, which seemed even wanting in her own happy home.

Kind reader—have you ever been in love? I do not mean that sober, sensible love of middle age—but the first love of warm-hearted youth, when sense is not thought of, and the one alone remembered. If you have felt this, you can fancy Charlotte's love.

The evening wore cheerfully away, and at an early hour the travellers said good night. Henry whispered a passing caution to his dear Lotta as she left the room—it was a useless one.

A gentle tap at the door of Charlotte's chamber disturbed a very pleasing rumination, in which she was indulging, she opened it, and Miss Leslie entered—she was a pale, and very interesting looking girl, with a deep, settled melan-

choly, that at once won Charlotte's pity—her eyes, of the darkest grey, were beautiful, but seldom raised, and when they were, their sad expression surprised in one so young. She now timidly advanced, apologizing for the interruption, and said she had forgotten something in a closet adjoining; and opening a small door which Charlotte had not before perceived, she brought out a pile of books.

"I trust I have not been the cause, Miss Leslie, of depriving you of this room," said Charlotte.

"Oh no, Miss O'Carroll," replied Miss Leslie, "but that closet window commands such a sweet view, I often come to read and work there. My bed room is at the other end of the corridor. These two rooms belonged to Barton and Roland, when they were little boys; they were their play-rooms; and my aunt choose them for you, as they both command beautiful prospects; the windows of this room overlook the gardens."

“How kindly thoughtful of her,” exclaimed Charlotte, “but I hope you will continue to spend your mornings here during my stay, and I shall be delighted to join you, for I love reading and working.”

“Thank you, Miss O’Carroll,” said Miss Leslie, “but my aunt made me promise I would not indulge in my fancy for solitude during your visit, so I must try and exert myself and appear gay;” this was said with a sad smile. “I owe my dear aunt more than I can ever repay, she has acted a mother’s kindest part towards me, and most dearly I love her,” and a tear started to the fair girl’s eye.

Charlotte felt for her emotion, and in silence took her offered hand, and kindly pressed it.

She rose early next morning, and we trust may be pardoned for that feeling of awakened vanity which made her bestow unusual care on her toilette—her plain, black dress became her greatly, and if she had seen herself as others saw her, she might be vain for a very lovely

girl she was. She stood sometime at the open window gazing out on the scene before her; the ground was covered with snow, and icicles hung in glittering bunches from the trees; the view certainly was as lovely as a winter scene can be. The grounds around were beautifully diversified by hill and dale, and the numbers of scotch firs among the plantations of the valleys gave the woods a furnished look; a river, moderate in size, flowed lazily along, seemingly afraid to disturb the peace of the scene; and here and there by its banks rose many a pretty cottage, with little hedge rows, and gardens, and all that air of snug comfort peculiar to English cottages. At a short distance, through an opening glade, appeared the pretty town of Marthorpe, built on a hill-side, and the blue smoke rising gracefully through the clear air from its numerous chimneys added to its picturesque appearance. It was truly an English scene, and a peaceful stillness reigned around; this was soon broken by a peal of bells from the steeple of the

village church, ushering in the Christmas morn.

“A merry Christmas to you, sister mine,” exclaimed Henry underneath her window, aiming a snowball at her face, and there is my Christmas box for you.”

And the snowball fell on her head, and sparkled amid her beautiful curls.

“Many happy Christmases to you, Miss O’Carroll,” said both the young Percies, who were with Henry.

Charlotte thanked them, and laughingly shaking her moistened hair, left the window, and hurried to her mother’s room to wish her the compliments of the season. She found her dressed, and her little sisters busy in examining Christmas gifts their mother had just given them in their father’s name.

“He did not forget his darling Lotta,” said Mrs. O’Carroll, for here is a beautiful little watch and chain marked for you. He got all those pretty things in London before he went

to Spain, and forwarded them to me to Exmouth, desiring I should not open them until this day, and then give them in his name. May we be all as happy this day twelve months."

She fondly embraced her dear children. They all descended together, and were greeted by many kind wishes from their amiable host and hostess.

A merry breakfast party they were—Mr. Percie in joyous spirits, and even Emma Leslie looking less sad. He quizzed Barton and Roland about certain nameless dames, and Emma blushed, and Charlotte tried to look unconscious; his bluntness however was near being the destruction of Miss Malden's new, cashmere dress, for Miss Leslie, who was filling out some coffee, and who sat next her, let the cup overflow, and would in all probability have continued pouring it; had not Roland good-naturedly stopped her hand, and saved

Miss Malden's dress, though his own hand suffered from the scalding coffee.

"Mrs. O'Carroll," said Mr. Percie, when they had all finished breakfast, "if you wish to attend Divine Service to-day, you must lose no time in setting out; we have no Roman Catholic place of worship in our village; the nearest chapel is seven miles distant, and I have ascertained for you that prayers commence there at half-past twelve o'clock."

"I should indeed, Mr. Percie," she replied, "be very sorry to miss attending the services of this great festival. I am very much obliged for your thoughtfulness, and if you please I will now order the carriage."

They all rose from table. Charlotte was standing aside in a window, when Roland joined her and said—

"Will you deem it necessary, Miss O'Carroll, to accompany your mother to service? It is a long drive, and a bleak and cold one

such a day as this ;” and he pointed to the snow.

“ Our religion,” answered Charlotte, “ commands our regular attendance at mass on Sundays and Holidays ; it is a precept we always attend to.”

“ I’ll accompany you then,” said Roland, “ and perhaps you will convert me from mine evil ways.”

“ I should have a very bad opinion,” replied Charlotte hastily, “ of that person’s sense of religion, who would willingly, without a just cause, give up joining his own congregation on this Holy and solemn Festival, and going to one he believed to be in error.”

“ Can you be in error in any way ?” asked he.

“ I hope not in this,” said Charlotte. “ I am no bigot, though I think my own religion the best ; but I trust in the goodness of that Providence who will mercifully regard the good of every religion, and kindly

repay their efforts to serve Him in sincerity. It would be a sad and sorrowful doctrine, to believe that none but Catholics will meet hereafter in Heaven."

"And it would be truly sad to me," whispered Roland, "to think that Protestants and Catholics might not be united on earth."

She raised her eyes to his, but quickly bent them on the ground, and followed her mother to prepare for their drive.

CHAPTER XII

THE O'Carrolls returned at a late hour from chapel, and Charlotte immediately sought her chamber, and having changed her dress, entered her mother's room, which she found empty ; the peals of laughter which she heard below stairs induced her quickly to descend, and in the hall she found the whole company still in their morning dresses, assembled round Barton Percie, who was making his pet

monkey Jocko play all kinds of tricks for their amusement.

"Oh, Lotta," exclaimed little Camilla, running up to her as she joined the group, "you've had such a loss, for the dear monkey has been so funny."

"Imitate a young lady's singing, for Miss O'Carroll," said Barton, and the monkey did so in a most ludicrous manner, and indeed seemed very willing to amuse his admirers.

"Come," said Mr. Percie, "this is very good and very pleasant, but we must remember our dinner."

All retired to change their dresses, but Charlotte, who, having made her toilette, went into the drawing-room; inside this was a small sitting-room, opening into a conservatory. This room was adorned with family pictures; there was a large one representing Barton and Roland as mere children - the former with a whip and

hoop, and the latter with his little arms round a large dog—a likeness, as Charlotte fancied, to her old pet Sam. Charlotte stood gazing at this picture. There was Roland—she could not mistake him—the same bright smile played on his face—that winning, arch look; she sighed very gently, — her sigh was echoed, — she turned and beheld the original of the picture she had been admiring.

“That is a beautiful dog,” said Charlotte, a little confused, “it is so like one I have at my dear home,” and Charlotte seated herself, and began reading apparently with great diligence.

Roland went into the conservatory and returning in a few minutes, with a small branch of myrtle, and a camellia in his hand, approached Charlotte.

“Will you wear these to oblige me?” he asked, in so gentle a voice, that she smiled. “I fear I forfeited your good opinion this morning, Miss O’Carroll,” he continued, “and

I assure you I prize it very highly, for I dare not hope for more," he sighed.

Charlotte took the flowers with a "thank you, Mr. Percie," and placed them in her bosom. She thought she ought to say something, but what it should be she could not tell, so an awkward silence succeeded. After a few minutes Roland seated himself near her, and seized her hand. She struggled to release it.

"Forgive me, Charlotte—Miss O'Carroll," he said in a low voice. "I fear I am foolish—perhaps presumptuous, but I love you dearly, and sincerely."

Charlotte snatched away her hand, and she rose from her seat.

"Stay, Miss O'Carroll—have I offended you? Say I have not! Say you do not dislike me! Oh, speak! Tell me, you forgive my folly—let us be friends at least."

Charlotte tried to speak, her voice seemed gone. She held out her hand—blushing deeply, and Roland pressed it, saying—

"Oh? forget what I have said, if it offended you."

Charlotte entered the next room intending to leave it, but the door opened, and Miss Leslie entered, followed by Barton. She cast a meaning glance at Roland, and then at Charlotte—and the latter thought her usually pale cheek was now of an unhealthy red. The rest of the guests soon appeared, the conversation became general, and the evening passed away with great merriment to all.

Mrs. Edward Percie was a gay, animated woman, her husband a cold, formal man, the very reverse of his brother, the Vicar; and young Leslie was a light-hearted boy, a very great contrast to his sister, but all joined in endeavouring to please.

Charlotte began next day by resolving to treat Roland as a friend, to avoid all *têtes-à-têtes* with him during her stay, and to enjoy the gaieties that surrounded her, but each day

proved to her that she felt an increased pleasure in his society. Staying under the same roof with a lover—a young and first love—is certainly delightful; you retire to rest, knowing you will join him in the morning, and you feel a separation from him during the day, enlivened by the hope of the evening meeting. Most true it is:

“ Oh ! there’s nothing half so sweet in life,
As love’s young dream ”

Charlotte fancied none perceived Roland’s admiration of her, it was so respectful; yet others did; though among them was not Mrs. O’Carroll; she was singularly deficient in seeing the growing attachment between them. She knew not much of the world’s ways; she had married young, the friend and playmate of her childhood, with her parent’s sanction. She now saw her children happy, and she rejoiced in it; no fear of Charlotte’s losing her heart to young Roland Percie ever disturbed her.

Nearly a week of their visit had passed—the mornings were devoted by the gentlemen to shooting, and skating, sometimes for the ladies' amusement. Roland more than once left his sport and returned early, to Charlotte's secret pleasure, and if she was incautious in betraying the truth to him, could she be blamed, so young as she was.

The evenings passed merrily in round games, music, and an occasional dance, for Mrs. O'Carroll begged dancing should be permitted.

In Miss Leslie, Charlotte found an acquaintance that delighted her much; her efforts to please were unceasing, and in her gentle and amiable sadness, with her apparent delicacy, there were charms to attract and give an interest to her character.

The last day of the year came, and the afternoon being a beautiful one, Emma Leslie proposed to Charlotte that they should take a walk to Marthorpe, to see her aunt's schools.

“ They always get a thorough cleansing during Christmas week,” said Emma, “ so we shall see them in nice order.”

Charlotte willingly assented, and both young ladies, equipped in winter clothing, set out.

There is something peculiarly exhilarating in a walk on a clear frosty day, and Emma even found her spirits revive ; she had taken a great fancy to Charlotte, and she in return liked her extremely—Charlotte was giving her an account of their first meeting with the Percies when Emma interrupted her by saying,

“ Pardon me, dear Miss O’Carroll, for my bluntness, but I must give you a friend’s opinion, a friend’s advice too ; I am it is true, young, yet I have known much sorrow, and that brings on premature steadiness, I have often observed Roland and you together—he loves you—and it strikes me you love him—or only like him, is it ?” and she turned towards her companion. “ May I be candid,” asked she ?”

"Certainly," replied Charlotte, in as firm a voice as she could command, "I wish you much to be so."

"I have known Roland," continued Miss Leslie, "since he was a mere child, we have been brought up together—he is warm-hearted and kind, the best of sons and of brothers, but has two great failings. A very quick temper, and an unsteadiness of character, are faults which in a married life will cause unhappiness; Barton is unsteady too," and she sighed, "Do not blame me, dear Miss O'Carroll, if I offer you advice—try to check your feelings towards Roland—be to him a friend, and nothing more, I ought not perhaps to say so much."

"Indeed," replied Charlotte, "I feel very much obliged to you for this kind interest. It is true," and she blushed as she said it, "I like your cousin, Roland Percie, better than any young man I have ever met—but marriage is yet unthought of by me—I am happy—ah,

much too happy in my present peaceful life to wish for change."

"So I once thought," said Emma, "my brother and I were left orphans at a very early age, and I came here to reside with my dear aunt Percie, and here I have remained except during my school days—our fortunes are ample yet what are they in comparison to a home, and parents to love one—this has been a home though to me, here I have met every kindness, and I am not ungrateful," she paused. "Two years since I went with my aunt to Tenby, for change of air, for a summer, and there I met one to whom I gave my whole heart, and I believed he loved me, for he often told me so, in accents you can feel but once; I returned here an altered girl, and my lover told me he would soon come to claim me as his own," she shuddered, "I never saw him after—he was in high life—fond of gaiety—he returned to the pleasures of London society, and last year he

died in a duel, fought about some gambling debt!" her tears fell fast, "I have tried to forget him," continued she, and sometimes, for a time, I succeed. Barton often says he loves me—he only loves me in a careless way, and I cannot return even that love. To avoid him I spent the last few months with Mrs. Edward Percie. My aunt is anxious I should become her daughter-in-law, but I cannot, no I never shall," and tears again choked her utterance.

"Compose yourself, dear Miss Leslie," said Charlotte, taking her hand, "Barton is good and kind, and amiable."

"He is," answered Emma, "but were he perfection, I would not offer him a blighted heart! had I never known George Darwin I might have been happy,—but I shall be so soon, for I feel gradually sinking into an early grave."

"Say not so, Emma," said Charlotte.

“ My mother died young,” replied she, “ of consumption, in the midst of happiness, and why should I be left on this cold earth—but I am saddening you,” added the amiable girl, seeing tears in Charlotte’s eyes, “ Come, forget what I have said ; here are the schools—we will go into them.” They entered a beautiful, neat cottage of some extent, “ You see,” said Emma, “ they are in perfect order, they are under my dear aunt’s special directions, and at the end of every half yearly examinations she and uncle Percie give prizes to the most deserving.”

“ Perhaps you would like to see the church, Charlotte,” asked Emma when they had inspected all the school-rooms, “ there is a beautiful painted glass window in it, and some handsome monuments.”

“ I should like it very much,” said Charlotte, and they passed a half an hour in seeing the interior of the building.

Emma stopped by a newly made grave outside the church door and read the date.

"Here," said she, "lies a fine young woman whom I knew well, she was only three months married and she died about a fortnight ago of fever—and here, near her, I shall be buried under this beautiful laurel—the evergreen is my choice of a tree over my grave, for it speaks immortality. Do not be surprised at my talking so carelessly of death. If you ever are made to feel the worthlessness of this world's enjoyments, you will understand my feelings."

"We have loitered here too long, Emma," said Charlotte gently, "come, let us walk quickly towards the vicarage."

They had not proceeded far, when they were joined by the young men, with their guns and their dogs. Charlotte thought Henry looked tired and flushed.

"I fear there will be rain to-night," observed Henry, "for the wind is changing."

"Oh I hope not for your sakes, gentlemen," said Emma. "I dare say you would all die of ennui, if you were confined to the house during the mornings."

"I hope it may rain, and heavily too," said Roland, "for then in a day or two, we should be able to ride to see the ruins of Delsarne Abbey."

"And then, Emma," exclaimed Richard Lealie, "you must finish your pretty sketch of the ruins; but I beg Miss O'Carroll's figure may be placed in the foreground, instead of young Mrs. Bimston's. You may remember, sister, how jealous her husband seemed of our admiration of her."

"He will never be so again, Dick," said Emma, "for we saw her tomb to-day—she died since of fever."

"Indeed!" said all the young men in sad and surprised tones.

"'Tis but a picture of this world's uncer-

tainty," replied Emma—"in life and health to-day, and withered and gone to-morrow."

The party reached home, and Charlotte gave full vent to her tears in the solitude of her chamber—tears the cause of which, if she had endeavoured to analyze, she would have found it difficult to explain.

CHAPTER XIII.

As Henry predicted, rain set in, and for two days continued so heavy, that the gentlemen were forced to give up their field sports, and remain in doors. One of them had felt no inclination to the *ennui* Emma had foretold. for Roland, in Charlotte's company, felt a happiness he had never known before, though her occasional coldness made him sad ; he resolved to seek an explanation of it, but she carefully shunned all attempts to induce her to

converse privately with him. The third day came in that, sometimes, beauty of a winter's day, that makes one forget they are still in wintry time; a general softness seemed to have succeeded the cold of the frost and snow; the sun shone brightly, and Henry, who was declared very weather wise, said "it looked too bright to last," however, a visit to Delsarne Abbey was decided on, and on horseback, and in the carriages, the whole party set out in high spirits. Charlotte, Emma, and Mrs. Edward Percie, were the only ladies on horseback, and the young gentlemen all accompanied them, Mr. Edward Percie gave his wife in charge to Henry, who proved himself, she said, a very careful and agreeable escort, and he drove with the Vicar.

They proceeded at a quick pace to the ruins — Roland by Charlotte's side, and Richard Lealie, by her request, at the other. She seemed studiously to avoid conversing with Roland, and tried all her agreeability in amus-

ing Richard. Roland soon perceived this, left her and joined Henry and his aunt.

"It feels cold, I think," said Charlotte to her companion, "let us ride fast, and reach the ruins before the rest of the party."

They cantered off, and soon reached their destination, which was about seven miles distant from Marthorpe.

"Will you get off your horse, Miss O'Carroll?" asked Richard, who had quickly dismounted, and stood by Charlotte's bridle, proud of his being her sole escort.

"Yes," said she, jumping lightly from her saddle.

Richard, in his haste to assist her to dismount, had neglected to fasten his horse's bridle, which when the horse perceived he galloped off, leaving his rider to admire his giddiness; he fastened Charlotte's horse to a tree, and apologizing for leaving her alone, ran after his own, which had turned towards Marthorpe.

Charlotte was not sorry to be left to herself, and she entered the Abbey, and wandered on admiring the beautiful ruins; the handiwork of man, holding out for ages, bearing the marks of its very strength in its gradual decay. She reached a small doorway, and passing through it came on an enclosed court; from this she issued by an archway, and found herself on the edge of a green descent sloping down to a river's bank, which flowed on calmly as if afraid to disturb, by its noise, a scene, so ancient and so holy. A small, stone seat was here, and Charlotte seated herself, and began thinking of what mostly occupied her thoughts—of Roland.

“He does not really love me, thought she—Emma was right—he is unsteady.”

A deep drawn sigh and a few girlish tears escaped her; she brushed them away, and rose determining to join her party, and put on a gaiety she did not feel. Roland

appeared as if seeking her, and he looked agitated.

“Miss O’Carroll,” said he, “Richard told me you were alone, and now grant me five minutes’ conversation. Sit down—we will await our party here—they are back some way, for a trace of my mother’s carriage broke.” And he made Charlotte sit down.

A half an hour passed, and Roland had again confessed his love in all the glowing ardour of youth, and drew from Charlotte a timid avowal of her feelings towards him; and there in that retired spot, Roland vowed he had never loved but her, and that she alone should be his wife, or he never would marry. He produced a ring—a pretty one it was, the designs forming a “forget-me-not,” of pearls and turquoises!—he put it on Charlotte’s slender finger, and asked her, in love’s most persuasive accents, if she would wear it for his sake, until he gave her another ring, and

she promised. She thought not of the difficulties that lay before her, ere she could marry Roland Percie — she only, with youthful thoughtlessness, dwelt on the present time. Hitherto indulged in every wish, she acted according to the impulses of her heart, and she then felt no regrets. Roland showed her Henry's ring, which he had kept since the evening at Exmouth.

“I will preserve this,” said he, “dearest Charlotte, as it contains your hair, though it is useless as a remembrance; I require nothing to remind me of these happy moments—but I must get *one* promise from you—and it is a simple one. My first request you will not refuse,” and he took her hand—now not withdrawn, “your lips could not utter a harsh—*no*, I am sure,” continued he, “say yes, Roland.”

“Yes Roland,” she replied in the lowest and sweetest tone, blushing as she spoke his name for the first time.

“ Thanks, dearest, and now for this request ; you have acknowledged you love me — that I love you, and how devotedly, you cannot doubt. I am young you know, and at present, only a lieutenant in the army—but next year I hope to be a captain, and then I may claim your hand—I do not doubt your constancy, but I ask you to mention to none our engagement—let it be a sacred and secret link between us until we meet again. Fear not that I can forget you—and now, ere we are disturbed again, say ‘ yes, Roland, ’ ”

Charlotte hesitated—the party were heard approaching.

“ I shall believe you do not really love me, if you do not promise,” said Roland hurriedly. What could she do — she answered quickly—

“ I will do as you please.”

Emma and her brother first joined them, and the former noticed their confused looks, whilst

Richard, after telling Charlotte how gallantly he had captured his run-away horse, felt rather surprised that she heard him in silence, when she ought to have applauded.

"She is changed certainly, within this last half hour," thought he, "for she was the gayest and most agreeable girl I ever met, when we were riding hither," and he followed his sister down to the river's edge, and assisted her across some rude stepping-stones, which had been placed at this point across the river. Emma called to Charlotte to join her, and placing her at a short distance, sketched her figure in the foreground of her drawing.

"Now Richard," said Emma, "show Charlotte that view round the corner of the Abbey—it is best seen from that point; and Roland, come—do not leave me, but like a good, obliging cousin, sit down and sharpen my pencils, for I am in a hurry with this drawing."

Both obeyed her, but Roland did not do so with a good grace, however, the drawing was soon completed, and he and Emma hastened after Charlotte and Richard.

“ I think Henry’s predictions of the weather are too soon to be fulfilled,” observed Roland, “ for see, a heavy shower is approaching—let us hasten to the shelter of the Abbey walls, there is no house near.”

He gave Charlotte his arm, and they turned to retrace their steps ; before they gained the stepping stones, however, a very violent winter shower came on, which completely drenched them ; and when they joined the party, who were all sheltered in an old vault of the Abbey, their clothes were wet, and Mrs. Percie declared they looked very like two heroines of romance.

For nearly an hour the rain fell in torrents, and Mrs Percie, expressed the greatest fears for Emma, who was obliged to remain in her damp dress, but to venture out was madness,

and the carriages and horses had been sent, before the rain commenced, to a neighbouring farmer's house. Charlotte laughed off any fears expressed for her, saying she was a hardy mountaineer, and the many whispered fears from Roland, made her rejoice in the wetting.

The rain cleared off, and Charlotte and Emma mounted their horses, with commands from all to ride quickly home.

How different were Charlotte's feelings from what they had been during her ride in the morning—she was glad to have a quiet hour to herself before the dinner bell rang.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE next day Charlotte and Emma were compelled to remain within, and take every precaution against cold, though the former asserted she scarcely ever remembered having had one, and the latter declared she felt quite well ; however, in the evening she complained of a head-ache and a shivering, and next morning awoke very feverish with a violent cold. Most carefully did Charlotte nurse and tend her, but on the third day of her illness, the day

Mrs. O'Carroll had fixed to return to Exmouth, the doctor, in attendance, pronounced Emma in a high fever, and Mr. Percie hurried his guests from the house, lest they might catch the infection. Charlotte gently urged a request, to be allowed to attend on Emma, but she was not permitted to do so, and she feared to press for permission, lest any one should suspect her secret attachment to Roland.

Mr. Percie handed them to their carriage, promising to send regular accounts of Emma — and they left the Vicarage with regret.

For some days Emma's recovery seemed very doubtful. She was on the verge of eternity — unconcious of it — but slowly her youth triumphed over disease, and for a time she lingered. At the end of six weeks she was taken to her friends at Exmouth, for change of air. How attentively her wishes were complied with by all around her ; and how assiduously Charlotte sought to amuse and please her.

Her cousins, Barton and Roland, often rode

to see her, and many delightful interviews the latter enjoyed with our heroine ; talking over their future plans. Roland at each interview pleading for permission to write to her, when parted, if only once ; with a lover's eloquence he argued away Charlotte's scruples, till at last she yielded assent to receive a clandestine letter.

But time, spend it ever so delightfully, will pass, and the quicker seemingly from its pleasantness. Roland came one day with a heavy heart, for he had to join his regiment in a distant part of England.

"Charlotte," said he, "in parting, I have this morning told Henry of our engagement—he asked me for the ring—but he will not betray us."

"*Betray* us, Roland," exclaimed Charlotte, "what a word—dear, dear Henry—I am delighted he knows all—it will be such a pleasure to speak to him about you."

"You may find fault with my words Miss

O'Carroll," replied Roland, " but do not do so with the feelings that prompt them," and Charlotte sighed to see him look really angry.

"Miss O'Carroll, Roland, is it," asked she, with a sweet smile, "forgive her." The lovers' quarrel was quickly made up," and they parted.

A month saw Emma Leslie apparently in her usual health, and as February was now passed, Mrs. O'Carroll was anxious to return to Coomcarne Park, to prepare for her husband's arrival. She urged Emma frequently to return with them, but she would not ; and Mrs. Percie promised, in her name, that during the coming summer, they would pay her a long visit ; so they parted, hoping to meet again in health and happiness ; though Charlotte, as she assisted Emma into the carriage, marked with grief, her still sunken cheek and changing colour.

Another month and the O'Carrolls were again

comfortably settled in their home, most joyfully anticipating the return of Mr. O'Carroll and Manuel.

Charlotte resumed her usual rides, but they were often passed almost in silence, or when speaking, talking only of Roland, for Henry was entirely in her confidence, and, in the praises he bestowed on the object of her ardent attachment, won additional love from Charlotte, at least, she now gave him credit for discrimination of character, and she valued his opinion.

Mr. O'Carroll and Manuel landed at W——, and hastened to Coomcarne Park, where a large bonfire blazed to welcome them home, and a happy circle they formed that evening assembled round the fireside. Each had much to tell, but Manuel spoke chiefly of a travelling companion they had met, a Lord Archgolle, whilst Mr. O'Carroll echoed all his son's praises; and Charlotte longed, as she

gazed on her dear father and brother, that they should know Roland — then she sighed when she thought of the difference of their religion, a subject on which she had often heard her father's opinion, but she speedily chased away every sigh with a hope for the future.

Oh ! happy time of youth, when hope gilds each coming event with bright visions of bliss ! Charlotte had now been a year in the world, and was she changed since then ? Her father remarked that she had become very serious, and thinking that she felt *ennuied* with the quietness of her present life, proposed to his wife, that they should travel.

Charlotte was consulted, and asked which she would prefer, a tour round the Scottish lakes, and then the English, or a more lengthened, continental tour. The beauties of their own land they had all visited. Had she been asked the same question eight months before, how gladly would she have

chosen the latter ; but now England had a magic in it, which she could not resist.

“ How glad *he* will be to see me,” thought she, “ If we should meet. If I knew his address, I think I should write—his regiment was stationed at Durham when we parted—but he did not write to me as he said,” and she sighed.

July was determined on for the commencement of their tour. Miss Malden and the children were to remain at home, and Henry, in June, was to go to a German university, where Lord Archgolle had been educated, and to which, Mr. O’Carroll had taken a fancy to send him while he himself seemed glad of the change, and novelty.

Mrs. O’Carroll wrote to beg Emma Leslie to join them in this tour, but the answer to her letter, which she received from Mrs. Percie, caused her much regret; Emma was too ill to write, and of course too ill to think of joining a party of pleasure. The letter was kind and friendly,

and concluded with a hope, that the whole party would pay Marthorpe Vicarage a visit before they returned to Ireland, to which invitation Mrs. O'Carroll wrote an assent, for her husband was very anxious to be introduced to the Percies.

Some evenings after their decision, the whole party was assembled in the large drawing-room, the ladies working, and the gentlemen engaged reading. Mr. O'Carroll broke the silence by asking Manuel what regiment his friend Archgolle had entered? Manuel answered—

“ The 73rd.”

“ Oh ! I am really glad of that,” for here are the stations of the different regiments, for this month, and the 73rd changes from Plymouth to W——.

“ I am delighted,” said Manuel, springing from his chair, with unwonted energy, “ show me the paper—are they coming to W——, or are they come ?”

"Here, my dear boy," replied his father giving him the paper, "satisfy yourself,"

During the rest of the evening Manuel spoke of nothing but Lord Archgolle, and the pleasure he should feel in meeting him.

"You will like him greatly, Henry," said Manuel.

"I am not so sure of that," replied Henry, "for all the young lords I have known, thought too much of themselves or of their titles to be agreeable acquaintances."

"Lord Archgolle," said Mr. O'Carroll, "is a very superior being, and free from all self-conceit; he is a young man, who, by an extraordinary will of his father, is a minor until he is twenty-five, unless he should marry before, and is obliged to content himself with a small annuity, though he will eventually be the possessor of many thousands annually; he was too, obliged to travel for three years—he was finishing his wanderings when we met him, and then intended

entering the army. His sisters are married, and he has no tie to bind him to home; besides he is Irish by his mother's side, and half a Papist."

"Take care of your little heart, Lotte!" said Henry, and he smiled, for well he knew that caution was unnecessary.

Manuel had thrown by the paper—Charlotte took it up, and her eye brightened as she saw that the regiment Roland was in, had changed to Edinburgh, she was going there—her father would see him—like him—and she should be so happy.

Soon after Lord Archgolle arrived with his regiment in W——, and his friends at Coomcarne, lost no time in welcoming him to Ireland. He certainly merited their warm eulogiums for he was most unaffected in his manners—very lively and agreeable, and elegant looking; he seemed at first greatly struck by Charlotte's appearance, and turning towards

Manuel, reproached him, in a low voice, for never telling him he had such a beautiful sister.

"I am very glad you admire her," said Manuel, "and when you know more of her, I think will like her."

A large party were assembled at Coomcarne Park to welcome the new comer, and among them Mrs. Cardon and Amelia; the latter determined, if possible, to engross Lord Archgolle's conversation; and hearing he was very musical, resolved that evening to surprise him, and gain his admiration, by a display of her musical talents.

"Charlotte," she remarked, "had become very silent and serious," so she hoped by her attentions, to keep Lord Archgolle to herself.

The dinner party passed off not as dinner parties often do, in silent stupidity, but very agreeably. Lord Archgolle appeared to great advantage, and Charlotte could not help observing how frequently his eyes were

bent on her, and she felt relieved when the ladies rose to retire.

"We must have music to night," said Amelia, "for Lord Archgolle told me he was passionately fond of it," and she tripped into the music-room, followed by Charlotte, who took up a book and sat, apparently, reading, till she was aroused by hearing Amelia play the air of the duett, Roland and Barton had so often sung, and the music of which she had copied when at Marthorpe Vicarage,

"Where did you get this song, Miss O'Carroll," asked Amelia.

Charlotte rose and saw that Amelia had opened all her music folios.

"When I was in England," she replied, leaving Amelia to her study of the song.

A servant entered with coffee, and presented to Charlotte two letters, one from Emma Leslie, the other—her heart palpitated—she opened it, and found it was from Roland—the first she read, and then took it to her mother; it was but a few lines, an effort from an invalid—

but it expressed much gratitude for their kind remembrance of her, and hoped to be better before they visited Marthorpe. Barton she mentioned as being engaged pursuing his studies—but Roland's name she omitted, and Charlotte smiled as she marked the omission. She must be pardoned for retiring to her dressing-room, leaving Amelia alone to practise her music ; and reading and re-reading her first love letter—it was all she could desire.

What a pleasure is conveyed to the heart by a kind and affectionate letter from a loved friend ; Charlotte with a light and happy heart descended to the drawing-room, and for that night at least, she was proof against Lord Archgolle's attention.

Henry noticed her additional animation, and he, really liking his friend Roland, rejoiced in the cause—he was very young and so was Charlotte, and both had their dreams for the time to come ; theirs was the season of joyful anticipations — yet a sad future lay before them !

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLOTTE found, on re-entering the music-room, Amelia still at the piano. She was playing over, and humming at the same time, Roland's duet, but on the entrance of Lord Archgolle, who followed our heroine from the drawing-room, she commenced.

Charlotte was seated on the sofa and by her

sat Henry. Lord Archgolle stood near examining some prints.

"Prevail on Miss Cardon to sing, Lotte," said Manuel advancing to Charlotte, "Lord Archgolle is very fond of singing," she immediately rose and asked Amelia to sing, for she was free from any paltry feelings of fear that Amelia would eclipse her.

"Excuse me," answered Miss Cardon hastily rising from the piano, and seating herself near Lord Archgolle, "I cannot sing to-night—I thought," added she, turning to him, "your lordship said you were fond of music."

"So I am an enthusiastic admirer of the gentle science," replied he, continuing his observation of the prints.

Charlotte who had gone into the drawing-room returned with the two Miss Mastertons, who very obligingly sang some pretty duets. Lord Archgolle left his prints — joined the group round the piano, and seemed much pleased.

“ Now, Lotte, comes your turn,” said Manuel, who seemed bent on showing off his sister before his friend ; and she at once complied, and sang to the harp, one of Moore’s Melodies—the words of which, seem a part of the tune.

“ Do you know this little song, Miss O’Carroll,” asked Lord Archgolle, taking up Roland’s duet, when he had thanked her very gracefully for her sweet song.

“ Yes, replied Charlotte, “ Henry sings it with me,” and they sang the duet, with great feeling and taste.

When they had concluded, Lord Archgolle said—

“ This is a peculiar favorite of mine, though it is more than three years since I heard it—it was on the eve of my leaving England for my travels ; you may remember, Manuel, having often heard me speak of the *fête* I was invited to, at Dover, by the officers then quar-

tered there. We were a large, merry party, and among us were two young men of the name of Percie, one an ensign in the regiment, lately joined, who sang this song with such exquisite taste I have never forgotten it since."

"Were these young mens' names Barton and Roland Percie," asked Henry, "for we knew two of that name, at Exmouth?"

"Yes, they were," replied Lord Archgolle, "their father is vicar of some place in Devonshire, and a near cousin of mine, so take care what you say of them," added he laughing.

Charlotte thought Henry's praises sounded rather cold, but during that evening, she applied herself with great pleasure to entertain Lord Archgolle, as Roland's cousin, and not a thought of making a conquest of him entered her mind. She was Roland's in every thought—pledged to him, and she would have hated herself, if she thought she could ever cease to love him.

Unfortunately, Lord Archgolle knew not this, and each visit he made to Coomcarne Park, he felt an increasing pleasure in her society ; she was always glad to see him, and he *almost* loved her for that total want of coquetry she excelled in. His attentions were marked towards her, and her father and Manuel were never weary of lauding him—both wished much for him as a husband for Charlotte.

May arrived in all its beauty, and many gay, rural parties they had, yet Charlotte did not enjoy them—she longed to have them over—that their tour might be begun, for in Scotland all her hopes lay.

June came, and Henry prepared to leave for Germany, Mr. O'Carroll intending accompanying him to London.

Charlotte deeply felt the parting with him for he was her favorite brother—her confidant—and as she listened to all his plans for the

future, on the eve of his departure, she fervently hoped he might live to realise them.

At his request, they had strolled out after dinner, to the summer house by the lake's side, and there they passed an hour or two in talking and planning. Often was Roland's name introduced, and many happy days were looked forward to.

"It is late, dearest Lotte," said Henry, "so we must return home. You will miss me often in your walks and rides, but I will write frequently and you will reply and tell me all and everything ; and when I come back I shall be so much improved—three years pass quickly—and I will study so diligently, and try to be a *great* man—a learned man."

"Take care of your health, my own, dear Henry," said Charlotte, "for indeed I do not think you are as strong as you fancy yourself."

And Henry gently chided her for saying so ;

and together they strolled home, through that beautiful Park in the silvery moonlight ; and Charlotte often, in after life, thought of her gaiety and happiness during that ramble.

The adieus were spoken next morning, and Henry was gone.

“ Good bye ” is a sad, sad word when loving ones part ; and Charlotte felt all day very lonely, but she endeavoured to cheer those around her, for all regretted Henry’s departure—he was so lovely and beloved.

In the evening, the whole of the family walked to Peter’s cottage, to enquire for the poor old man who was slowly recovering from illness ; returning home, Charlotte proposed to extend their walk homewards through the woods : Mrs. O’Carroll said she felt too fatigued to do so, but that she would return home the shortest way with Miss Malden, whilst the children very gladly joined Charlotte in taking the longest ramble.

"Oh, Lotta," said little Camilla clapping her hands, as they reached the edge of the lake, "here is the little skiff, and do let us take a nice row on the water."

"Do sister," said Mary, "and Cammie and I will pull the paddles so well—so steadily—you know Henry taught us to row."

"And we will sing the Gondoliers' Chant Roland taught us," added Cammie, "oh! do."

Charlotte got into the little boat, and the children pulled it skilfully across the lake; at the same time singing very prettily, and Charlotte in return sang for them. They had reached the end of the lake where the avenue wound by it.

"Look Lotta," said Mary, "there is the post-man passing, shall I ask him if he has a letter for you?"

"Do," replied she.

The man came, in answer to the call, to the

water's edge, and gave a letter for Charlotte; it was from Roland.

"Is it from Emma Leslie?" asked Camilla.

"It is not, dear Cammie," said Charlotte, while a slight blush overspread her face.

"From whom is it then," pursued she with childish inquisitiveness.

"It is not from England," said Charlotte, and she continued reading it, while little Cammie seemed anything but pleased, that she had not been told who the writer was.

"Charlotte read, and she felt her lips grow cold, and her heart beat wildly. She had not written a reply to Roland's first letter, and he reproached her bitterly for her neglect—feared she was forgetting him, and concluded by urging her, if she, indeed, still cared for him, to write at once; she put the letter into her reticule, she gazed on his ring—and she thought on his love, and the warmth with which he had pledged himself to be hers, and

hers only ; and then she remembered that Henry her confidant was gone—and tears started to her eyes.

“ Mary,” exclaimed Camilla, rather pettishly, “ see, you are pulling too strong—you have put us on the bank,” and the little boat stuck fast on a sandy and ridgy bank.

“ What shall we do now, sister ?” asked Mary, “ for see, the mischief I have done ?”

Charlotte rose to try and move off the boat—her thoughts were wandering—she took the paddle from Mary, and standing in the bow of the little boat, pushed with all her strength—it moved off suddenly, and the jerk threw her head foremost into the water.

“ Do not be frightened, loves — it is not deep here,” said she, to her terrified little sisters who were screaming violently, “ sit still,” and she began to wade through the water to catch the boat.

“ For God’s sake stop, Miss O’Carroll,” ex-

claimed a man's voice from the shore, which was near at this point ; but Charlotte still held the little boat fast, and as she turned, beheld Lord Archgolle advancing rapidly through the water ; she knew it deepened all round the bank she stood on, and she tremblingly called out to him to stop.

"Fear not," replied he, "I am an expert swimmer," and in a minute more he was by her side—had placed her in the boat, and then taking the only remaining paddle, commenced rowing them to the shore.

The children soon forgot their fright, and gaily ran on together before Charlotte, who, leaning on Lord Archgolle, was impelled by him to her utmost walking speed, to guard against cold after her wetting. They walked for a short time in silence.

"Miss O'Carroll," said Lord Archgolle, "you must be surprised at seeing me here, at this unseasonable hour. I took an early dinner at

W——, and the evening was so fine, I could not resist riding over. I was passing along the avenue, when I noticed your little boat party—so giving my horse and a small basket of shells, I procured this morning, to a servant whom I met, I started to join you.”

“You are very kind, Lord Archgollie,” replied Charlotte, “and I assure you we shall always be glad to see you.”

“Would that I could believe you would be always so, Miss O’Carroll,” said he, “that belief, would indeed give me inexpressible pleasure. I hope you will like the shells,” added he, “I heard you last week wish for some, to complete your collection. Two of them—the caliotes spendens, my cousin Roland Percie gave me, when we were school-fellows at Eton. I had a letter from him this morning,—it seemed a cold and strange one too—I thought I had written him long accounts of you all, knowing how very intimate you had been, yet he sends no kind message,” he looked at

her blushing cheek, and a silence followed.

"You seem not in your usual spirits this evening, Miss O'Carroll," resumed Lord Archgolle.

"I feel so lonely," replied Charlotte, "without my dear Henry."

"I wish, oh, how truly, dear Miss O'Carroll, there was no one dearer than Henry absent—forgive me if I seem forward. I have known you it is true, but two months—two happy and delightful months, yet I feel as if we were old acquaintances. May I speak freely?"

"Certainly," answered Charlotte.

"Miss O'Carroll," said he, "It was my father's dying request that I should marry young; to urge me to do this, he made the extraordinary will you have heard me speak of, and I entered life determined to fulfil his wishes. I travelled for three years—I met ladies—young and beautiful, but never could find one to love—" he paused, "until I met

you—you have realised my boyish dreams of all that is estimable in woman, and you, Charlotte, I love sincerely and disinterestedly, Will not you speak—say one word to me ?”

Charlotte was mute—she hung her head, and relinquished the arm which supported her.

“It is then, as I feared,” added he, “I have often and often observed you, when Roland’s name has been mentioned—I have seen your pleased look when Henry praised him, and I too have seen your *almost* angry one, when Manuel has spoken slightly of him—believe me—I would give all I possess, to think you only liked him as a friend.”

“Lord Archgolle,” said Charlotte, “I thank you for your good opinion—I value it most truly, as—” and her promise of secrecy to Roland stopped her—“I owe you this avowal—my affections are irrevocably fixed—engaged—where I cannot say—forget me—or rather think of me as a friend that

wishes you well in all sincerity," and she held out her hand to him, it was that on which was Roland's ring, and she thought of him—her only love.

Lord Archgolle took it kindly.

"Miss O'Carroll," said he, in a faltering voice, "I will try to think of you as a friend, and warmly I wish you every happiness—had it been fated that I could have been more—how fondly would I have loved and cherished you—your wishes should have been laws, but now—"

"You must forget all this," she replied—"no one shall know of this conversation, believe me. Continue to visit us, during your stay, and we will always be good friends," added she, smiling kindly.

He pressed her hand, and with a "God bless you" mounted his horse and rode quickly away.

Charlotte had invited him to join them at tea, and to change his wet clothes, for when are

the duties of hospitality forgotten by an Irish-woman ; but his lordship felt he ought not, and for a week he abstained from visiting at Coemcarne Park, and when he came, Charlotte always found some excuse for absenting herself ; he remarked this and applauded her motives, though he regretted the cause.

CHAPTER XVI.

AT the end of the month, Mr. O'Carroll returned from London, having seen Henry on board a sailing vessel, which was to convey him to Hamburgh, whence he was to proceed to the University of Gottingen.

One of Mr. O'Carroll's first enquiries of Manuel was, if Lord Archgolle continued his attentions to Charlotte, and he felt a regret when he was told that they had met very seldom during his absence, and that Char-

lotte did not seem to like him. In truth her thoughts were solely engrossed by the prospect of soon meeting Roland.

She had written a few lines to him—she read them over and over, and after she had spoiled several sheets of paper, then finding she could write nothing that would satisfy her, determined not to send any answer to his letter, thinking what a joyful surprise it would be to him, to see her in Edinburgh.

Days passed, and July came in with fair, mild weather, the O'Carrolls left Coomcarne Park and arrived in Dublin, and Mr. O'Carroll remarked with pleasure, how much improved Charlotte's spirits were; she laughed and talked with all her former gaiety, but he was very far from divining the real cause.

From Dublin they sailed to Liverpool, and thence, after a tour round the English Lakes, proceeded to Edinburgh, intending to

remain there a week, and then proceed to visit the beautiful Scottish Lakes.

"Will you take a stroll through the town, ladies?" said Mr. O'Carroll, to his wife and daughter, the morning after their arrival in Edinburgh, as they sat loitering over a late breakfast, "It is indeed well worth seeing, and we must remember that as tourists, we are bound in conscience to see everything we can."

"I feel quite fatigued this morning, Henry," replied Mrs. O'Carroll, "from our very long journey yesterday, so I will rest and join you in a walk in the evening—but I am sure Lotta will go—she looks very willing."

"Indeed I am, dear mamma," said Charlotte, rising, "shall I go now, father, and put on my bonnet, I am very anxious to begin sight-seeing?"

"Do, love," said her father, and away

she hastened to her toilet, pardon her dear reader if she bestowed an extra degree of care in adjusting her bonnet, it was only for the admiration of *one* she perchance might meet.

She took her father's arm, Manuel walked with them, and they gaily advanced along the streets — passed from the new to the old town, and were ascending the steps when Charlotte, looking up, saw, advancing towards her, Roland Percie, leaning on the arm of another officer.

She felt her heart beat wildly, — he advanced—he started—he looked at Charlotte, and she saw him turn deadly pale; he glanced at Manuel, then at her father, and passed on without bowing. This passed in a moment, and unnoticed both by Mr. O'Carroll and Manuel, who were busy in admiring the old castle they were approaching.

Charlotte felt her head grow dizzy and her limbs tremble. Her father, on whom she was

leaning, remarked the latter, and attributing it to fatigue, asked her if she would not like to rest.

"Very much," she replied, and her father then noticing her pale cheeks, seated her on an old seat outside the castle.

She tried to conquer her feelings, and before her father and Manuel had finished their inspection of the castle, she had succeeded, and they quietly descended towards the town.

"Here is a bookseller's shop," said Mr. O'Carroll, "I want to buy some story books, for Mary and Cammie, so you can rest yourself again, Lotta."

They entered a large and handsome bookseller's shop, and she seated herself; but had scarcely done so, when she heard the sound of a well-known voice, and advancing towards her from the end of the shop, she saw Roland.

He looked at her, and noticing her paleness, bowed, and speaking in a cold, constrained voice, hoped she was well.

She bowed her head, for she could not speak.

Was this then Roland—her own beloved Roland?—so changed. But a womanly feeling of offended pride came to her aid, and she struggled to repress the tears that were ready to burst forth.

Roland remarked her agitation, and asked in a low voice which of the gentlemen was the fortunate husband.

“My husband!” said Charlotte, a gleam of pleasure emanating from her eyes. Here then was Roland’s coldness accounted for, and that too in a way which showed how he loved her. “My dear father and my eldest brother are my companions,” added she, and Roland’s delighted look more than repaid her for the short anxiety his previous coldness had caused.

"Charlotte, dear—dear Charlotte, forgive me,—I believed you false, and now married."

"Ah! Roland, you little know me," sighed she, but the sigh was a happy one. "Come," added she, advancing towards her father and brother, "I will introduce you to these formidable gentlemen."

Mutual enquiries passed between them, and before Mr. O'Carroll had completed his purchases, Charlotte had forgiven — nay, remembered with pleasure Roland's cold salute.

"Do you feel quite strong now, Lotta?" said her father, — "I need not ask though, for you have recovered your bloom—the walk up that steep hill was too fatiguing."

Roland looked at her smilingly, and she saw he understood the cause of her fatigue and recovery.

"You will accompany us I hope to our hotel, Mr. Percie," said Mr. O'Carroll,

He looked at her, and noticing her paleness, bowed, and speaking in a cold, constrained voice, hoped she was well.

She bowed her head, for she could not speak.

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“Charlotte, dear—dear Charlotte, forgive me,—I believed you false, and now married.”

“Ah! Roland, you little know me,” sighed she, but the sigh was a happy one. “Come,” added she, advancing towards her father and brother, “I will introduce you to these formidable gentlemen.”

Mutual enquiries passed between them, and before Mr. O’Carroll had completed his purchases, Charlotte had forgiven — nay, remembered with pleasure Roland’s cold salute.

“Do you feel quite strong now, Lotta?” said her father, — “I need not ask though, for you have recovered your bloom—the walk up that steep hill was too fatiguing.”

Roland looked at her smilingly, and she saw he understood the cause of her fatigue and recovery.

“You will accompany us I hope to our hotel, Mr. Percie,” said Mr. O’Carroll,

He looked at her, and noticing her paleness, bowed, and speaking in a cold, constrained voice, hoped she was well.

She bowed her head, for she could not speak.

Was this then Roland—her own beloved Roland?—so changed. But a womanly feeling of offended pride came to her aid, and she struggled to repress the tears that were ready to burst forth.

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"Mrs. O'Carroll will be very happy to see you."

"With great pleasure," replied Roland.

And together they strolled towards the hotel.

Mrs. O'Carroll received Roland with a very warm welcome, and enquired most particularly after all his family, and made him promise to join their dinner circle.

"You know now, I suppose, all the lions of the town," continued she, "so you shall be our *cicerone* this evening. Charlotte will have much to ask you about Emma Lealie."

"I shall feel great pleasure in satisfying her curiosity," answered Roland, and he sat down near Charlotte on a sofa, at the end of the room. "I had a letter yesterday from my mother," added he, "and poor dear Emma is, I fear, wearing slowly and surely away; she will not consent to a removal from Marthorpe Vicarage, to which she is much at-

tached, and I believe, no change of air can now avail her ; — here,” said he, in a low voice, “ is my mother’s letter, read it, dearest, for you are mentioned in it more than once,” and he slipped the letter into Charlotte’s hand.

She took it, thanking him with a look for this proof of his confidence.

“ Manuel,” said Mr. O’Carroll, who stood at one of the windows, “ make haste and come hither,—is not that young man with that fat lady, there, on the other side of the street, our friend, William Masterton.”

“ It is indeed, father,” replied Manuel, “ you know William came to Scotland some months since, on his uncle’s death.”

“ I dare say that lady is his aunt—see, she is dressed in deep mourning, whoever she is,” said Mr. O’Carroll, “ I will go and speak to William; in this strange country, he will be glad to come and dine with his old Irish

friends,—you will excuse me, Mr. Percie, for half an hour ;—your old acquaintance, here, will entertain you,” and he took up his hat, and followed by Manuel, quitted the room.

“ You will think us a rude couple, I am afraid, if I leave you too,” said Mrs. O’Carroll, “ but I was writing a letter when you came, to Miss Malden, which I am anxious to have finished for the post time—you will excuse me also ? — Charlotte say everything for me, and I’ll be back in ten minutes.” She hastened away, and Roland thought an apology quite unnecessary.

“ Will you say everything for her, dear Charlotte ?” asked Roland, taking her hand, “ and a great deal more than she would say, I hope, —my own betrothed bride. Ah ! Charlotte, if you had known one half the misery you made me suffer, by not writing. You know Lord Archgolle, my cousin — why do you

blush? he often writes to me and always speaks in such praise of you, that I could not help fearing that his rank—his riches would make you forget your poor lover.”

“ You wronged me bitterly, Roland,” said she, “ if I had ceased to care for you, should I have kept this ring?” and she showed his ring.

“ That I did wrong you, Charlotte, gives me happier feelings than I have felt for months. Listen to me, in Lord Archgolle’s very last letter, he speaks of you almost as if he loved you, and he adds jocosely : ‘ I will send you some green ribbon on her wedding day ;’ little did he dream how that mere sentence affected me. Well, I tried again and again to frame some excuse for your silence, and endeavoured to persuade myself, you, so young and so fair, could not be false ; I almost hoped sickness prevented your writing, and I kept up my spirits, strange though it may

seem, for a whole week, and then in an Irish paper, I read your name among the fashionable arrivals in Dublin—and you were enjoying yourself and had forgotten me. In this state of mind I met you this morning—married, as I thought, and can you blame my coldness—my formality.

“Roland,” said Charlotte, “I began several letters to you, but did not think them worth sending—you know now I did not forget you, it was only too much I thought of you,” and tears started to her eyes.

“Charlotte, dearest girl, I believe you, I would lose my life rather than doubt you. Tell me one thing; did Lord Archgolle ever propose for you—did he hint even that he loved you?”

“Roland,” replied Charlotte, trembling a little, “you have no right to question me thus.”

“No right,” exclaimed he vehemently, “to

question you—you that are engaged to me—you who say you love me. Pshaw—love me—what is love without confidence?” and he rose and walked about the room, whilst Charlotte remained mute and pale as a statue ; at length he stopped before her, and said in a broken voice, “Charlotte, I love you as woman was never loved, deeply and truly.”

She sobbed and told him all ; but concluded by assuring him that no person had known it.

“And why did you refuse him, Charlotte?” asked Roland in a pleased tone.

“You need not ask that question at any rate,” replied she smiling, as the door opened, and her father entered with Manuel and young William Masterton, whom she felt really glad to see—far away from home we gladly welcome the face we have seen beaming by our “ain fire-side,” and William too was a friend of Henry’s, and he was brother to Alicia Masterton, and all these added to the warmth of her,

“How do you do—I am very glad to see you.”

He remained to dine, and after dinner, all the party walked out to visit Holyrood Palace.

CHAPTER XVII.

How many solemn thoughts does a visit to a ruined castle, or an ancient dwelling-place, conjure up. The past comes before us as we tread the scenes of former splendour, and the gaiety of those who adorned these scenes, their enjoyment, and too often their sufferings, stand before us in the vividness of reality ; and they have all gone from earth, and generations after them are swept away, and we pause and think that our turn too will come—that we, now happy and full of health, must follow

them to that "bourne whence no traveller returns," our names forgotten, and others filling our places ; and they in their turn yielding to the all-wise decrees of Providence, will leave this fair earth for a fairer and a better land, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Holyrood Palace brings painful thoughts to the mind of the thinking visiter ; for who can forget the ill used, the beautiful Mary Stuart—her wrongs—her woes—and her death.

Our party had surveyed every apartment of this antique pile, and had paused a long time in that chamber which is shown as the fatal scene of David Rizzio's murder. They reached the court on their return. Mr. and Mrs. O'Carroll, and William Masterton were a short way in advance, Charlotte following with Manuel and Roland.

"Oh, I fear I have lost my reticule," said Charlotte, "and I had a letter in it I should not wish to lose;" she looked at Roland as she spoke—it was his mother's letter.

"We had better seek it then," said Roland ; and they returned. In the gallery they stopped.

"Cannot you remember where you left it?" asked Manuel.

"I think it probable I dropped it in Rizzio's chamber where we remained so long," answered she.

"Stay, then," said Manuel, "wait for me, and I will run and seek it;" he hastened away and the lovers were alone.

"Charlotte," said Roland, in a low, hesitating voice, "take my arm, and let us walk slowly before your brother, I have much to say."

"It is better to remain here for him," replied she, "and this is a delightful place for conversation, we can walk up and down this gallery, and admire all those beauties," and she pointed to the pictures which adorned the walls.

"It is not of them, Charlotte, I would have you now think," said Roland; "but of me, and of my feelings. After our conversation this morning I need not again tell you how I love you—how entirely and devotedly I am yours. You remember our engagement—the promise you entered into that happy day last winter, at the ruins of Delsarne Abbey;—then I asked you to continue your love to me in secret for one year, and that then I would claim your hand, as a captain. Since then I have felt the misery of the delay;—I have known the anguish of believing you could love another, and I will not part again from you, without claiming your promised hand. Charlotte," added he, with increased vehemence, "there is but *one* way of proving you love me—by becoming mine irrevocably."

"My father would not consent to our union yet," said Charlotte, sorrowfully; "you are but a lieutenant——"

"And can my poverty"—interrupted Ro-

land, bitterly—"make a change in your sentiments?"

"None in mine, Roland," answered she;—"but think you, would *one* that forgot she was a daughter be a good wife? We are both young—let us have patience."

"Patience!" exclaimed Roland, hastily; "you may have it, but I can have none. I lead a roving life, and am not master of my time. When may we meet again?—my regiment may be ordered on foreign service—I think it very likely—and if it be, I shall go, and perhaps fall a victim to the climate, for I am not very healthy."

"Oh, say not so, dear Roland," said Charlotte, mournfully; "what can I do?—you would not have me grieve the best, the very, *very* best of parents by marrying without their consent. Ask my father—my dear father; he is kind and indulgent—tell him of our love—he may give consent after a time; and then—" she paused,

"What then?" asked Roland; but Charlotte did not answer. "Listen to me, Charlotte," added he. "I have sworn to be yours. Now if you will not be mine I swear, solemnly swear, to exchange into the first regiment ordered on foreign service, and there to end my miserable life. Though my parents would grieve for my loss,—for *they* love me truly,—*you would* soon be reconciled, and some wealthy and prosperous suitor would quickly make you forget your *poor* though devoted one."

"You are cruel—unkind—unjust, Roland," sobbed Charlotte—"you know how I love you."

"Then be mine, dearest Charlotte," said Roland; "and believe me, once mine, your parents will never blame your choice. If your father be the kind indulgent parent you say, he will willingly forgive you, and then we shall be *so* happy. We can live comfortably enough on small means; and *my* dear father

and mother, how rejoiced they will be to welcome their new daughter to Marthorpe; and then we will go to your beautiful Ireland; and when you have me with you will you regret having refused Lord Archgolle, or any of your other admirers—for I dare say you have hosts of them," added he, laughing.

"Roland," sighed Charlotte, "you do not reflect on what you urge me to do."

"But I have reflected," answered he, gaily, "and I will reflect all to-night, and to-morrow you shall hear of my cogitations," whispered he—for Manuel approached with the lost bag.

"You were right, Lotta," said Manuel,— "you left the bag in Queen Mary's room, but it was locked, and I had a long search to make before I found the key-keeper. Here it is, and I have not ventured to pry into it."

"Thank you, my dear Manuel," replied Charlotte, taking the bag, as they hastened to overtake their party.

"How long do you remain in Edinburgh?" asked William Masterton of Charlotte, as they sat at tea that night.

"A week—is it not, Father?" said Charlotte.

"Only a week," said William Masterton;—"I am very sorry for that, for on the 18th of next month there is to be a grand fancy ball given here, for charity too—and indeed it will be worth seeing; each chief of the clans will wear their own tartan; it will be a pretty and novel sight to you, Miss O'Carroll,—induce your father to prolong his stay."

"Her father will be most willing to gratify her, William," replied Mr. O'Carroll—"what say you, Lotta;—would you like to see this ball?"

"Certainly," answered Charlotte, and she thought more of the pleasure of Roland's company than of the ball.

"Well, then," said Mr. O'Carroll, "as we only came for pleasure let us remain here until

this ball is over. We have a good deal to see in this neighbourhood ;—there is Melrose Abbey, and Dryburgh Abbey—and—and—can you assist me, Mr. Percie ?” asked he, “ I forget any other lions.”

“ Roslin Castle is worth a visit,” said Roland.

“ Or, Henry,” said Mrs. O’Carroll, “ what would you think of visiting the lakes, during this interim, and returning hither some days before this ball ? You know the little ones at home will be anxious for our return ; and we have the promised visit to pay to Marthorpe Vicarage—one that will give me great pleasure ; and to conclude,” continued she, smiling, “ I promised Mary to be at Coomcarne for her birthday, the 2nd of September.”

“ What a blessing it is to have a wife,” said Mr. O’Carroll, gaily, taking her hand. “ Young gentleman, I would advise you all to marry as quickly as possible—marry young as I did.

What a sensible pair we were, Camilla, when Manuel was born ! Do you remember I wanted to take him in my arms out riding, when he was only a week old ? But we soon grew together a steady pair."

"Yes, father," said Manuel, "but all young marriages may not turn out so fortunate as yours did. The old proverb says—'marry in haste, and repent at leisure;'" and he glanced at Roland ; whilst Charlotte turned pale and red by turns.

"Here is a digression from tours to matrimony and happiness," exclaimed Mr. O'Carroll, "the real point in debate before us Mrs. O'Carroll has decided—we must set off on our visit to the lakes to-morrow ;—no not to-morrow, it will be Sunday ; but on Monday. Well, we will enjoy ourselves, and admire them as much as we can ; and we return here some days before this ball, that we may get fancy dresses, and all the paraphernalia that ladies take such

a time to get in order. Mr. Percie and William, we shall be very happy if you will join our party."

The former declined, saying, "he had business in Edinburgh that would occupy him for the next fortnight."

How little the father thought what that business was, and the latter very joyfully accepted the invitation. They wished good night, and Roland whispered to Charlotte, "I will see you to-morrow—remember you have your mind made up."

And did she sleep well that night! she lay for hours awake, tossing on a restless pillow, now determining to give Roland up, and wavering between love for him, and duty to her parents. She dozed, and dreamed a frightful dream; she thought she was standing on the beach, at Coomcarne Park, watching a vessel which was slowly approaching the shore; it anchored near, and a boat put off from it, and landed near where she was standing; it

was rowed by four blacks, and she felt a horror creeping over her. When they advanced towards her, and raising her from the ground, placed her in the boat, and pulled off quickly to the ship. She tried to scream—she struggled—but in vain; she felt unable to move—unable to articulate. They reached the ship; she was taken on board, and left motionless on the deck. She heard a mournful sound from below, as if of wailing. She listened—the sound approached, and two figures, clothed in long, black robes approached her; they wore long veils which hid their faces; one took her hand, while the other continued a passionate lament, and said in a hollow voice, “Follow me, I will show you your work.” Charlotte followed—they descended a ladder, and entered a room all hung with black, lighted by lamps, which cast a blueish light around. Strange figures stood all round the room, and on Charlotte’s appearance, all joined in a long, loud wail. Her

conductors stopped before a couch, which was in the centre of the room, covered with black ; they raised the covering, and Charlotte saw, lying dead, Roland Percie. His eyes were half opened, and he appeared shrunk and sallow ; his hair was cut close, and he seemed a ghastly sight. The veiled figures raised their veils, and disclosed the pale and worn faces of Mr. and Mrs. Percie. They rushed towards Charlotte, and seized her, exclaiming, " It is your work—your work—you made him leave his country, his home, his friends, and see how he returns." And they caught her in their arms, hastened with her on deck, and flung her overboard, saying, " So do we punish your faithlessness." Charlotte screamed—she bounded up, and awaking, found herself on the floor, by her bedside ; for some minutes she was bewildered, but she regained her composure. The morning was breaking with a faint, dull, grey hue, and Charlotte dressed herself, for she determined not to seek

repose again where she had had such frightful dreams. Yet she was not happy, even though we know it is a blissful feeling to awake to the reality that our horrid sleeping thoughts and fancies are unreal. There is no happiness in this life apart from the consciousness of acting rightly. The pleasures of this world may taste sweetly, and enjoyment *seem* ours; but while a kindly feeling remain in the heart, the sting of conscience will embitter life that has strayed from the path of righteousness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"You seem pale, Lotta," said her mother, affectionately to her, when she appeared at the breakfast table.

"A cheerful walk after prayers will restore the bloom to her cheeks," said her father; "I asked the young men to come here at three o'clock, and join us in a ramble, and then dine. Now Camilla," added he, merrily, "see, Lotta has recovered her complexion—the mention of the walk even does her good."

"Or the mention of our escorts," said

Manuel, pointedly, for he had observed Roland's attention, and feared in him a rival to his friend, Lord Archgolle.

Charlotte laughed—an unnatural forced laugh it was, and seemed very hungry, so eagerly did she commence her breakfast.

Three o'clock came, and brought the young men punctually, and after luncheon they all walked together towards Salisbury Craig, and if Roland had hoped for a few private words with Charlotte he was disappointed, for Manuel kept close by her side, and this annoyed her too, for she wished to argue again with Roland, to show him how foolish, how blameable she thought his wishes. Something of her thoughts he divined, for on separating to change their dresses for dinner, he whispered, "When all are in their rooms, Charlotte, return here for *one* minute if you love me;" and she granted his request. They had all retired to dress, and Charlotte, trembling, descended; she found Roland greatly agitated.

"God bless you, my love," said he, tenderly, "I will not detain you *one* minute—remember *all* I said yesterday—remember I swear to its truth to-day, and now say, will you be mine? Or here we part for ever and *ever*. By to-morrow's coach, I will start for London—go abroad."

Charlotte shuddered, her dream was before her.

"Say *one* word, Charlotte—one word—either yes or no? and what a change will the simple monosyllable make." Where was Charlotte's resolution! where those arguments she had wished to urge. All vanished, all forgotten—as, sobbing, she murmured the fatal "Yes!" Roland folded her in his arms—his first embrace—and, with a "God bless and reward you," quitted the room, and Charlotte noiselessly gained her chamber, and there gave way to floods of tears. But her toilette had to be made, and all emotion conquered. She dressed herself, bathed her eyes, and appeared in the sitting room, apparently the same girl, yet feeling, oh! how differently. Her abstraction during the even-

ing, was noticed by her parents, and often by Manuel. They were to leave early next day, for St. Andrew's, by water, for Mrs. O'Carroll loved the sea, and Roland gracefully wished them a very pleasant journey. Pressing Charlotte's hand, he slipped a piece of paper into it! on it was scribbled, hastily, a few lines, saying, "he would have every preparation made for their marriage, on her return—licenses obtained, and witnesses ready, and fear not," he added, "happiness will be ours, though our lot will be an humble one. Enjoy yourself during your trip, but think sometimes of *one* who will count the hours until you return." Charlotte read and re-read the lines, until her sight ached, and she fell asleep on her chair; she awoke with a start, hastened to bed, but sleep had fled, and gladly she hailed the morning's dawn. The tour was commenced, and Charlotte tried to seem gay, but a caress from her father made her heart beat, and often and often she longed

to speak—to tell him all, but her promise to Roland withheld her. From St. Andrew's the tourists proceeded to Dundee, and thence to Perth; yet the beautiful scenery of the Tay with its lovely lake, seemed to Charlotte, not beautiful. The gentlemen ascended Ben Lawers, the third highest mountain, in Britian, and Charlotte thought there was a time when she would have gladly scrambled up mountains, and enjoyed the very difficulty; but now the most romantic scenes amid which she was—and singularly wild and magnificent they are—charmed her not. With the aid of guides and good ponies, the ladies visited the celebrated waterfalls, of Aberfeldie, Acharn, and Bruan, and the Lochs of Tummel, Bannoch, and Ericht; the last the scene of so many of Prince Charlie's sufferings, after the battle of Culloden, and the very wildest district in Scotland. They returned to Perth, and thence proceeded to Stirling, visiting the lakes of Ard and Menteith, passing two

days on Loch Lomond, and a day on the exquisite Loch Katrine, and here Charlotte felt her taste for the beauties of nature conquer her former indifference; admiring this lovely lake, and the wild sublimity of the Trossachs, filled her mind with awe.

Three days before the ball they returned to Edinburgh. By Mr. O'Carroll's wish, Mrs. O'Carroll consented to accompany them to the ball, and beautiful she looked in her still deep mourning dress. Charlotte wore a black satin, and Manuel alone went in a fancy dress, it was that of a Spanish Grandee, and it very well became his Spanish look. The scene was a gay and very brilliant one, and Charlotte excited universal admiration; her father introduced her to an interesting youth about fifteen, who was dressed in complete Scotch costume; he was a Marques' son, his name Lord Adrien Wilson; he had been a college acquaintance of Henry's, and he seemed a gay-hearted creature, and very amusa-

ing. Charlotte was listening with pleased attention, to an account of some boyish scrape of his and Henry's, when Roland advanced towards her, and wishing her good night, said in a whisper, "We part for a few hours—you will find a note from me, on your table, when you return; it contains every direction—God bless you." He left the room.

"Are you ill, Miss O'Carroll?" asked her young companion, seeing her blanched cheeks; "Come into the outward room—it is cool there;" Charlotte took his arm, and mechanically followed him: "Take a little wine and water," said he, presenting a glass. She took some.

"I am better now," said she, with an effort, after some minute's silence; "We had better join my father and mother," and she exerted herself to appear gay, till the ball was over. Charlotte sprung from the carriage—ran up stairs, and threw herself on her bed, and gave way to tears.

"I did not bid Lotta, good-night," said her father to his wife, when they reached their own room; "I must go and say it to her now, and tell her to take a long refreshing sleep."

"Do not disturb her Henry," said Mrs. O'Carroll, "I saw her hastening to her room, and she seemed dreadfully pale and fatigued—she did not appear to enjoy the ball much—I trust she will be quite well and gay though to-morrow." They retired to rest, nor dreamed that their child was forsaking them.

And Charlotte, how did she feel? Four o'clock chimed, and found her still in her ball-dress; the day dawning through the half closed window, and her candle burning dimly with a long unsnuffed wick—in her hand was Roland's note—she read it ever and anon, and clasping her hands, started from her sitting posture, saying in a low voice—"It is too late to recede—and he loves me so well. I must go—I must go;" her ball dress was

laid aside, and in its place she put on a simple morning robe—a second-mourning one it was—she had no other—she put on her bonnet, trimmed with black—and in that dress, who would have thought *she* was going to be a bride? Her clothes she carefully packed up, and taking her keys, and her purse—a well-stored one it was by a fond father—quitted the room with a stealthy step—paused at her parents' room door—not a sound proceeded from it, and with a heavy sigh she quietly descended to the hall.

A very respectable woman advanced towards her saying: “Madam, Mr. Percie, desires me give you this,” and she handed a small piece of paper, on which was written—“This is the person I mentioned to you—she is wife to the sergeant of the regiment. Come with her to the end of the street—I will meet you there.”

Five o'clock tolled, as Charlotte passed the hall-door; a sleepy looking housemaid was

washing the steps outside, to her Charlotte gave some money, and walked quickly on with her attendant. At a short distance Roland came up, and taking Charlotte's arm, he led her trembling along, with many a whispered word of encouragement; at the end of the street, a carriage awaited them.

"We will drive first to the church, dearest," said Roland, as he handed her in, and made the sergeant's wife get in after her; the door was shut, and away they drove—And what were the young girl's thoughts during that short drive? She felt confused—bewildered—the carriage stopped—the steps were let down, and Roland carefully assisted his trembling bride into the church; here an officer awaited them, and they proceeded to the altar, and were married according to the rites of the Church of England, with every necessary form.

"You are now mine! for ever mine!" whispered Roland, as he fondly kissed the

blushing cheek of his bride; and proudly he led her to the carriage. "We will now go to your clergyman's house, for I shall show how anxious I have been to have you mine by every law."

Charlotte no longer hesitated.

"I have secured two witnesses of your own religion, dearest," said he, "they await us at the clergyman's house; you cannot imagine the trouble I had to procure this license; fortunately some of my acquaintances here were Catholics, and two of them used their influence with this old priest, and showed the necessity of his giving it, and at last he complied, and here we are now arrived."

They stopped at the door of a modest mansion, in a narrow street, in the old town, and entered the house, which bore evident marks of the poverty of its owner; they were shown into a parlour badly furnished, and here they had to remain nearly half an hour, in anxious expectation of the clergyman's

arrival; he came in, an elderly man, with a saintly look, and apologized for having detained them, by saying, "he had been at a sick call, attending a death-bed."

The witnesses came in—and the ceremony was over in a few minutes—that ceremony that is so lasting and so quickly completed.—The solemn tone of the old priest affected Charlotte, and she wept freely.

"My child," said the clergyman, laying his hand on Charlotte's head, when the ceremony was over, and before she had risen from her knees, "you are young to marry without a parent's or a guardian's protection. God bless you. Remember the command: 'Honour thy father, and thy mother, that thou mayst be long lived in the land, which the Lord thy God will give thee;' and if you have erred, seek their forgiveness, and may you be happy."

"And now, Mrs. Percie," said Roland, gaily kissing her, when they were in the carriage, "we will away to our cottage. Do you re-

member the pretty one you admired near Arthur's seat, one day that we walked to Salisbury Craig, I have taken that cottage for a month, and we shall be so happy!"

Charlotte smiled brightly on her young husband.

CHAPTER XIX.

"You have eaten nothing, my own dear wife," said Roland to Charlotte, observing her untouched breakfast, as they sat at a table in the cottage he had hired; "but you shall make up for it at dinner, when I return with your parent's blessing. How will you bear my absence for a whole hour?" added he laughing.

"The hope of your return with good news, dear Roland," said she smiling, "will cheer

my solitude; here is my note to my dear father and mother—they cannot refuse to forgive their child—they know ere this of my change of name, by your note to my father. Look how well Charlotte Percie looks,” added she, holding up her first signature of her new name to her husband.

“She does indeed, dear love,” said Roland, gazing fondly on his beautiful wife’s face, “now, good bye, for a short time,” and he embraced her, and was gone.

Charlotte amused herself for sometime in putting the little sitting room in order; two French windows were in it opening on a pretty flower garden, gay with the beautiful and varied flowers of autumn, and Charlotte filled several vases with them; there was a piano which her husband had hired for her use, and some new music, and a variety of books, and she arranged all with that taste that a woman alone possesses. “Dearest Roland will scarcely know this room when he comes back,”

thought she, "and dear mamma, and my father, and Manuel, how they will admire it," and she sighed gently.

An hour passed—two slowly wore away, and no Roland appeared—Charlotte sat down to the piano, resolved not to expect him for another hour—that too passed—five o'clock struck.—"I will walk to meet him," said she, and she put on her bonnet for the purpose, but she remembered her situation as a bride, and she laid it by—"yet no one would know me to be such," sighed she, and she glanced at her mourning dress—however I will buy another dress to-morrow, and she felt her well filled purse, and a tear started to her eyes, remembering him who bestowed it. "I will read," said Charlotte, striving to banish the uneasiness that she felt creeping over her, and she drew a table to the window, which commanded a view of the little avenue, and took up a book—she read some pages—the book dropped on the table—she nodded—her arms fell down—

wards, rested on the table, and her head soon sought their resting-place, and soundly she slept—a dreamless sleep.—Romance will say impossible—a girl in her situation to sleep—yet true it was—for nights her rest had been broken—the previous one she had passed without any rest, and expectation too is a wearisome feeling. When she started from her uneasy posture—she stood up bewildered; a chill breeze came through the open window, and the evening twilight was deepening into night. She rubbed her eyes—and when her recollection returned, she gave vent freely to her tears. Half an hour of agonizing suspense passed—she heard an approaching footstep—she rushed to the door, and Roland entered alone—and pale as death.

“Charlotte,” said he, catching her in his arms, “you have now only *me* to love—every effort of mine to induce your father to see me was unavailing, I tried your mother—your brother—I sent the officer who witnessed our

marriage—I called on Mr. Masterton, and sent him with a message, asking for a few minutes' conversation—but in vain—they were inexorable, and I watched them until they left."

"And are they gone?" exclaimed Charlotte, "left me without one kind word, one line of forgiveness," and she wept bitterly.

"Not without a line, dearest," said Roland, "though certainly not one of forgiveness—here is what your father sent me before his departure, by Mr. Masterton."

She took the letter from her husband's hand, pressed the well-known writing to her lips, and read between her sobs as follows:—

"Sir,

"Your note of this morning gave me the deepest grief I ever have known—you have taken my child—the most beloved of my

children—and a parent's heart alone can feel what a bitter wound a child's fault can give, you talk of forgiveness—is it a parent's duty to forgive the ungrateful conduct of a child? Your *wife's first* fault towards her parents is a grievous one, and one they *never*—never can forget or forgive in this life—from you she deserves love and kindness—you urged—you made *her* forget the respect she owed her father's sanction, or her mother's blessing on her marriage, let the punishment due to her fault come not from you—make her life as happy as it can be—remember all further apologies are unavailing.—The enclosed draught on my London banker for £5000, was bequeathed to your *wife* by her grandfather, to be paid on the day of her marriage. From me, she never will get any fortune.

HENRY O'CARROLL."

"And they are gone Roland," sobbed Charlotte, in an agony of grief, "and they have left

their ungrateful child ! Oh, why did I forget the duty I owed my kind, and loving, and devoted parents," and sobs choked her utterance.

The first three days of the honey-moon were mostly spent by Charlotte in bitter lamentation, and by her husband in gentle soothing, but before the week was over, she found sweet consolation in his attentions, and buoyed up by his hopes for the future, she almost gained her usual cheerfulness—yet there were times when the wrong she had done, would call forth her tears, but an affectionate caress from her husband would dry them up, and replace them with smiles.—By his desire she wrote to her parents—the letter was returned unopened—she wrote to Mrs. Percie, and to Emma Leslie, and to her own dear Henry, telling him of the rash step she had taken, but blaming herself entirely, and warmly praising Roland.

"To-morrow," said Roland, when they had

been just a month married, "our time of this little cottage is out, and as I have still two months leave of absence, where shall we roam to? We are now comparatively rich—thanks to your grandfather's generosity—and though *my parents* (he laid a particular stress on the words,) have been most kind about this marriage, you know they have not invited us to Marthorpe Vicarage until Christmas, whither shall we go now?"

"You know I have sworn to obey you, dearest Roland," replied she, pointing to her wedding ring.

"Well—it shall be a pleasant sort of obedience, my little wife," said he. "Suppose we were to go the tour of the Scottish lakes, and you can show me all the points of view William Masterton admired;—in truth I am sadly tired of doing nothing in this quiet cottage."

"Doing nothing," thought Charlotte; and she felt a rising sigh—she checked it, and

then added: "Indeed, Roland, I should be delighted to see them with you; but I fear I shall make a bad guide, for I was thinking too much of *you* when I visited them. Now I shall admire them so, this lovely autumnal season—and you know,

'How the best charms of nature improve
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.'"

The next day, before their departure, a messenger arrived from the barracks, saying, "a person had been enquiring for Roland—this was Charlotte's maid, Ellen Connor, who at her own request had come to live with her young mistress." She brought with her, from Coomcarne Park, every thing that belonged to Charlotte, even her collection of shells had not been forgotten, and she wept when she thought she had quitted that happy home for ever!

The tourists commenced their excursion next day. They loitered away two months

and then returned to Edinburgh barracks, and Charlotte felt, despite her best efforts to disbelieve it, that Emma Leslie was right, when she said Roland was unsteady; yet he was still a kind husband, especially when any little excitement or amusement cheered him—and Charlotte lived only to please him.

They were much visited on their joining the regiment, and entertained at several parties, and she thought she could be completely happy if her parents forgave her imprudent elopement.

CHAPTER XX.

A death bed is a scene that, once witnessed, cannot easily be forgotten. To see an aged person quietly sink into the tomb without a pang of regret, makes one feel death far less than to see a young person droop away in the prime of life, carrying to the grave the fond hopes of many a friend. The death-bed of Emma Leslie was a beautiful scene, yet a sad one. She had called her friends around her and bade them good-bye in cheerful tones,

though the voice was faint, almost to hollowness.

Barton was in London, but her aunt and uncle and her brother were there, kneeling by the bed of one they fondly loved.

"Aunt,—dearest, kindest aunt," murmured Emma, "weep not so—you distress, you grieve me—you know I cannot be happy on earth; it is a kind Providence that takes me where 'sorrow is unknown;' why then give way to such regrets?"—She paused almost exhausted. "Uncle," resumed she, "I charge you with my love, my warmest love, to Roland and Charlotte; and tell him," whispered she, "to love his young wife well—not to neglect her. Richard, my dear young boy, give me your hand.—How cold it is—don't weep. I've a strange fancy.—Tell me, are the leaves all off *my* beech tree?—look, and tell me truly."

And he sobbed an assent.

"I watched that tree in the early spring," said Emma, in a strong voice; "I saw it beau-

tiful in its green leaves, and I saw it still beautiful in its varied leaves ;—they fell off—and the tree is bare again ; and when it buds forth anew—where shall I be ? Richard, God bless you—you were ever a fond brother to me ; and if it be permitted the souls in the other world to watch over those they loved in this, I will guard thee.—God bless you all.”

Her utterance became thick, and she sank on her pillow, and that night—a calm and fair moonlight night it was—she sank to sleep, and awoke in that “better land” she had sighed for. Charlotte heard of her death with real sorrow, and she thought of her patience under her sufferings, and tears would start to her eyes to think how much one so amiable had been punished ; “and I,” she would think, “who quitted my parents’ side without a blessing or a kind wish from them, here I am left on earth in happiness.”

“You are greatly changed since your marriage, Charlotte,” said Roland to her, one

morning that he came in and found her in tears—"you are often crying and moping; I wish you would conquer yourself. Last year, when I knew you first, you were the gayest of the gay—an agreeable companion;—you are really grown pale and thin. Come, a walk will do you good;" and he took his wife's arm and they sauntered towards the cottage, where their honey-moon had been spent.

"Would you be again, Charlotte, as you were before you saw that cottage?" asked Roland.

"Not while I have you to love me, dearest Roland," replied she.

"I must always do that, Lotta," said he.

She sighed. Did she fear his steadiness?—Time showed if she had reason to do so.

The Christmas came, and Roland got permission from his commanding officer,—who was a kind-hearted old man,—to pass a month at his home, and Charlotte very delightedly

looked forward to going there. From Henry she had a long and affectionate letter, hoping a short time would reconcile their parents to her match; he was prosecuting his studies, he said, with great ardour, and hoped to have several prizes to bring her on his return; and Charlotte with delight took the letter to Roland, and showed it to him.

"Charlotte," said he, somewhat sternly, "you can write to Henry if you please, but I forbid you to write again to any other member of your family; they have used me ill."

"Will not you let me try *one* more letter, to my father, this Christmas, dearest Roland?" asked Charlotte, in a gentle, winning voice.

"Do you forget that you have promised to *obey* me Mrs. Percie; it is a wife's business, I think, not to expostulate," and he looked quite angry.

"Indeed, dearest Roland," replied Char-

lotte, "and sweetly I will obey you; and I do believe," added she, sighing, "another letter would have no good effect, for my father is firm and decided, though even indulgent."

"If *one* more line from you," exclaimed Roland, passionately, "were to give you his entire forgiveness, you should not write it, at least not with *my* consent; and now do not look so provokingly meek, but go and pack up for to-morrow's journey, and show *my* parents, by your cheerfulness, that you feel their kindness."

Charlotte left the room unhesitatingly, and strove during their journey to Marthorpe, to be lively and gay, to please that husband she loved so devotedly, and a kind word or a caress from him, repaid all her exertions.

It was a cold, wet evening when they reached their destination, and though her new re-

lations received her very kindly, she missed her own dear familiar faces. Emma, too, was gone, and what a change a year will sometimes make, in a family circle. There seemed a gloom over the house, Mr. Percie even appeared sad—Barton was really so, and Roland alone was gay.

“You will find us dull, this Christmas, my dear Charlotte,” said her mother-in-law, kindly taking her hand, and seating herself near her when they had left the dinner table. “We all felt our dear Emma’s death so much—poor Barton has not yet recovered it.”

“I cannot find Roland’s home dull, my dear Mrs. Percie,” said Charlotte; “Indeed, I feel more than I can express; how kind you and Mr. Percie have been to me.”

“Had we not even known you, Charlotte,” replied Mrs. Percie, “we should welcome our dear boy’s wife, and I hope we shall often have you with us.”

On the gentlemen's entering, Roland seated himself near his wife, and talked gaily to her for some time.

"Have you been thinking of last year, my love," asked he, "of our love scenes, and our little coldnesses? We must ride some day to the Abbey, the fatal scene of our engagement. Do you yet regret it?"

"You very well know I do not, my dearest Roland," said Charlotte.

"Oh, here comes my reverend father!" exclaimed Roland, "looking as grave as a church dignitary ought," and Mr. Percie approached.

"Will you forgive me, Roland, for disturbing your pleasant tête-à-tête?" said he; "I must take off your wife for a few minutes. Come, Charlotte, follow me!" and he led the way into the inside room, and shut the door. "Sit down here, my dear child, near the fire," said he, kindly: "I want to have a little chat with you," and he drew two chairs near

the fire side. " You must remember now, I am Roland's father, Charlotte, and very anxious for your happiness ; it is of your marriage I would speak : I little thought last year his boyish flirtations would end as it has done. You were too well brought up not to understand fully, the duty of a child to a parent ; the love, respect and obedience, owed from one to the other—you are young, it is true—but old enough to distinguish right from wrong—the actions of passion from those of principle. In your church, matrimony is considered a solemn and holy sacrament ; in ours a ceremony, but a religious one—not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand unadvisedly or lightly. You married privately—and I do not blame you so much as I do Roland, he urged you to it—you should not have consented, certainly. We may seem, by our asking you both here, to excuse your conduct, to think it blameless, we do neither Charlotte ; but kindness will often have

more effect than severity. I see, my child," added he, kindly, observing Charlotte's tears, "that you feel you have done wrong—that you regret it."

"Indeed ! indeed ! I do, most truly," sobbed Charlotte: "You cannot know what indulgent parents mine were ; they never refused me any gratification, and this remembrance adds to my sorrow, for having offended them. Do not blame my dear husband, though, for our rash marriage. I should have refused—I should have—I was in fault—I was——"

"You are an attached wife," said Mr. Percie, smiling: "Your fault, however great it was, does not lessen Roland's. You did not propose for him, my dear Charlotte?" she smiled. "Oh, you were both very, very culpable," continued he, "and your good father, and your gentle mother, how they must feel it. I seek not necessarily to wound your heart, but it is necessary to do more

than regret a fault. Did you write to them?"

"Yes," replied she, "I wrote on the morning of our marriage; and again when they had returned home—I mean to Coombe Park. A long and penitential letter, and it was returned unopened."

"You will write, my child, to-morrow, another letter—which I shall dictate—You owe them too much to hesitate making every reparation in your power."

Charlotte blushed; she stammered out something about being unable to do so.

"Why not, Charlotte?" asked Mr. Percie, in a serious tone: "Do you think any effort too great for those parents that loved you so well—whom you have so cruelly treated?"

"Roland," said she, in a low, mournful voice, "thinks I ought not to write again to them."

"Roland! my son!" exclaimed Mr. Percie,

"he forgets—He mistakes, surely ; he was ever a dutiful son. Come, Charlotte, dry those tears, and send your husband in to me;" she rose and sought Roland, saying:—

"Mr. Percie wishes you to go to him, Roland," then she seated herself, and began examining a book of prints ; she looked up—she was alone in the room—throwing aside the book, and pressing her hands against her throbbing temples, endeavored to suppress her tears.

In a few moments Mr. Percie entered, smiling, and taking Charlotte's hands in his, said, "Roland says you must do as I please ; go, to-morrow afternoon you will be ready and willing to write ; and now I must say, good night, for I have my sermon to prepare. God bless and guard you Charlotte."

She thanked him gracefully, and then went into the inner room to her husband. He was

seated by the fire; she brought a stool and sat down near him, and, looking up smilingly in his face, said:

"Dear, dear Roland, I am so much obliged to you for this permission to write again to my parents, and your good father is to dictate my letter. What is the matter, Roland, are you ill?" and she took his hand, for he looked much agitated: he drew it away hastily.

"I have to thank you, madam," said he, angrily, "for my father's first reproof. You indeed excuse yourself by saying *I* would not allow you, to write again to your parents! You may write once a day for what I care! they will be sure to forgive you, if you represent yourself to them, as an injured wife, if you try to convince them, as you have my father—that *I alone* was to blame."

"Roland," replied she, mournfully, "I said not so! I did not try to appear less culpable than I felt I was—your father can tell you that."

"My father shall tell me nothing on the subject!" interrupted he, "for I will not ask him. It was in this very room, last year, I was first a fool—there, near that cabinet, I told you, I loved you; believe me, were I to do it again, I should act more wisely: I should not now have a wife to reprove me—to point out my faults to my father. What an idiot I was to marry!"

"Oh, Roland, Roland!" said Charlotte, falling on her knees! "do not say those cruel words, or my heart will break," and she wept bitterly. "I have only you to love, you to trust, you—you will not forsake your poor, young wife: if I have offended you, I ask your forgiveness: Oh, for you I would do any thing! I do not care what others think of me, so as you love me. You know I would not willingly offend you.—Tell me what to do, and I will do it. Won't you, Roland?"

"Charlotte, get up!" said he, much agitated,

“and leave me, now ; it is late—and after your journey, you had better retire to rest.” He kissed her coldly, and poor Charlotte went to her room, there freely to give vent to her tears.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHRISTMAS morning was ushered in with very inclement weather ; the wind howled fearfully, and frequent hail showers made the cold, out of doors, extreme. Charlotte had just finished her morning orisons in her dressing room, when a quick, impatient knock made her rise from her kneeling posture and open the door.

Roland entered.

"I was afraid your toilette was not com-

pleted," he said, "for you ladies take such a time to beautify yourselves, and I want to have a little conversation with you, before you go down stairs ; you remember this is Christmas day."

"Indeed, I do, Roland," replied Charlotte, with a gentle sigh, "and I wish you very many happy returns of the festive day ; and myself as well to enjoy your happiness," added she, gaily.

"Thank you," answered Roland, hurriedly ; "I suppose you think my happiness would be very incomplete without my mistress," added he, sarcastically ; "I don't forget last night's scene."

Charlotte hung down her head ; she felt herself blush painfully, and a tear trembled in her eye.

"I can tell you," pursued Roland, "my wife shall not with impunity notice my faults. Your duty is to love, honour, and obey, and if you cannot do the first, you must the two

others. Now you may remember from your unfortunate visit here, last year, that *your* chapel is seven miles distant from this: your mother had her carriage here, and therefore your going thither this day twelve months, was no inconvenience to either my father or mother; but now the case is different, and your saying you wish to go will induce my father to order the carriage for you. My mother will have to go to church in an open vehicle, and the servants and horses will be taken fourteen miles this dreadful day, to gratify you; for my father has such odd notions about not thwarting one's religious feelings. It is my wish Charlotte, you remain at home this day—or, better still, accompany us to church, and thus show how much you love your husband." He took her hand.

"Roland, dear Roland," said Charlotte, solemnly, but in trembling tones—"remember you promised me faithfully, to let me worship God according to my own ideas of right and

wrong—I was brought up a Catholic—well and fully instructed in all the sacred tenets of my faith, and with the help of the Almighty Disposer of all things, I will live and die a Catholic.”

Roland threw her hand from him.

“I am not surprised Roland, you should think me weak and foolish—I have showed, at least in one action, that my principles of religion did not lead me to follow their dictates,” she paused—“I should deeply regret causing any trouble to your kind parents, Roland, but I cannot absent myself to-day from chapel. I am strong and well in health, and seven miles is nothing to a hardy mountaineer; say I may go, dear Roland,”—she tried to take his hand.

He pushed her from him—she receded several paces, turning deadly pale, and he turned quickly round without saying a word, and left the room.

Charlotte did not weep—she called up

all the courage of her mind, and after swallowing a little water, descended quietly to the house-keeper's room, the way to which she well remembered from the preceding year, and there, meeting the smiling face of Mrs. Bartlett, she asked "at what hour the family breakfasted."

"My mistress, madam," replied Mrs. Bartlett, "thinking you would be fatigued from your long journey yesterday, said she would not have it until ten o'clock."

"It is now only half-past eight," said Charlotte, "and if I wait for their breakfast, I shall not be able to attend prayers at Fenstowe, which is seven miles distance, and I remember prayers commence at half-past twelve o'clock."

"But the road is so good, madam," said Mrs. Bartlett, "that by leaving the vicarage at eleven you will be in time."

"Yes, driving it I should I am sure," answered Charlotte, "but I mean to walk, this

cold day, and you will oblige me very much, Mrs. Bartlett, if you send me up a cup of coffee to my dressing room, and if you ask one of the housemaids to be ready to walk there with me, and above all, if you say nothing about my intentions to the family until I am gone."

"Had not you better let some of the chaises be got ready for you, madam, indeed the walk is too long," urged Mrs. Bartlett.

"Oh, I am a very good walker," replied Charlotte, "and you will tell Mrs. Percie when she comes down to breakfast, of my being obliged to leave without seeing her, now I shall go and get ready," and away she tripped; her cup of coffee was soon taken, and accompanied by a maid who remembered her since the last year; she set out. During their walks through the grounds of the vicarage, it was very pleasant, for they were sheltered from the cold north-east wind, and the

road was dry and hard ; but on leaving the avenue, they found the public road muddy, and heavy, the wind blowing quite a gale. Charlotte had equipped herself very rationally, unlike a heroine of romance, in warm, winter clothing, with strong boots ; yet she paused when she found what she had to encounter, and felt half determined to return—"Roland if he be annoyed," thought she, "at my venturing out at all, will not be more so at my going on, than if I returned, and he cannot be justly angry with me, his wife—he loves so well."—Then her gentle mother's precepts of religion so early instilled into her mind—Miss Malden's instructions, and her own sense of what her religion obliged to, urged her on. "I never omitted attending divine service on a day of obligation, except when ill, since I remember ; and if I now fail, on this my first trial, well may Roland and his family condemn me as a weak erring girl. No, I will go on—my father-in-law, so liberal in

his ideas, will make this escapade be forgiven. What an additional pang it would give all at home—at Coomcarne—if they heard I neglected the duties of my religion.” Thus Charlotte cogitated for several minutes. “I am afraid, Susan,” said she turning to the servant that accompanied her, “this is a very long walk I am giving you; and instead of this day being one of enjoyment, I shall make it one of toil to you.”

“Oh ! madam,” replied Susan, eagerly, “I am delighted to do you any service, and indeed, madam, it is the greatest pleasure to me to go to Fenstowe, for my only brother is settled there, by trade a cabinet maker; and it is now three months since I saw him, though my mistress is always willing to give me leave me to spend a day with him.”

“In that case, Susan,” said Charlotte, “I will take you on without further regret. Come, we must walk fast;” and on they proceeded as briskly as the wind and dirtiness of the roads

would allow. Charlotte buffeted the weather bravely, though the seven miles seemed to her interminable.

"There is a fearful shower coming, madam," said Susan; "you had better take shelter in some house before it comes."

Charlotte looked at her watch—it was little more than ten o'clock; and, more in compassion to her companion's best dress than for herself, she consented.

They knocked at the door of a neat though small house, which was divided from the roadside by a little flower-garden, in perfect order, though the only blossoms it could boast were some wall-flowers and winter primroses. A young girl opened the door, her dress was very clean, and arranged with scrupulous nicety.

"Will you allow us to take shelter here from this coming shower?" asked Charlotte.

The girl eyed them suspiciously, holding

the door half open. "I must ask my mother," said she, and she closed the door.

Charlotte smiled—her companion seemed to look upon it as nothing strange. In a few minutes the girl returned, followed by a fat, red-faced woman, well dressed, who sturdily asked what they wanted.

"Only shelter from a passing shower, Ma'am," replied Charlotte, gaily, who felt amused by the difficulty of gaining admittance.

"Are ye gentle folks?" enquired the house-owner.

"Half-and-half," answered Charlotte, smiling.

"'Tis strange ye'd be out trudging it such a day as this, then," said she; "but come in, if you like. If that's all I thought ye wanted I wouldn't have left my breakfast, I can tell ye."

"Martha, here, show the leedies to the par-

lour, and stay with them yourself;" and she unceremoniously walked off.

Charlotte and her attendant followed their conductress through a passage into a kitchen, in which blazed a lovely fire; at one end a table was set, on which was every requisite for a very substantial breakfast; the cloth was beautifully white, the pewter vessels shone like silver, and something there was frying on a pan which smelt most savourily. The mistress of the mansion was busy inspecting its contents. At the table sat an elderly man, and four children of different ages, all well dressed, and apparently well pleased, discussing the merits of their breakfast. None moved except the man, who barely inclined his head to Charlotte as she passed him. The parlour adjoined this comfortable room. No fire sullied the brightness of the well-polished grate, but it was furnished in a style that Charlotte would not have expected in so small a house. There were chintz hangings to each of the

windows—one looked to the little garden, the other on a small court-yard; there was a sofa, a dozen mahogany chairs and a table; the floor was covered with green baize, and the walls were adorned with several gaudy pictures—these Charlotte carefully inspected: two were the likenesses of celebrated pugilists, two more represented game-cocks fighting; there was a picture of a shipwreck, with a pea-green sky and a yellow sea; there was a gentleman fowling—a drunkard falling off his chair—the likeness of Bolivar, very much unlike what he could have been—and, lastly, a cat, worked in red and blue worsteds,—such a heterogeneous assemblage.

“Do you often inhabit this room?” asked Charlotte of their attendant, Martha.

“Father and mother sometimes do—we don’t!” replied Martha.

“Ah,” thought Charlotte, “how unlike poor Ireland this is. Go to the door of the meanest or most comfortable house, and a ready

welcome awaits one—no need to ask leave to enter—the best chair, in the best apartment, in the warmest corner, is yours ;—and how politely the poorly clad creatures will rise and salute you ; if they be eating will they ever fail to offer you some of their food ?—and so hospitably too. Oh ! I would rather have your mud-cabins, with your smoke and your dirt, my dear country, than England's prettiest cottages ; for in the former there is within what ' *passeth show* ;' in the latter have I not here experience." Thus she thought as she stood gazing out of the window on the little garden, through which she had entered.

The rain had begun to descend in torrents ; suddenly she saw a carriage driving furiously along the road ; it pulled up at the entrance to the cottage, and two gentlemen sprung from it—and one giving the reins to the servant, followed his companion to the cottage door, which they assailed with very loud knocking.

"I hope these gentlemen won't gain entrance here," said Charlotte, in a low voice, to Susan.—"Mind, if they do, you give them no information as to who we are."

Sounds reached from the kitchen. Charlotte heard the mother of Martha say,—“Oh, they are only half-and-half.”

“Let us in then, good dame,” said a voice Charlotte thought she recognised, “and we’ll pay you most willingly, for any damage our wet boots do;” and the landlady, smiling, opened the door, and two gentlemen, well muffled up, followed her.

Charlotte let down her veil and turned her chair towards the window. She could not decide who the intruders were, though the voice she had heard sounded familiar; both gazed on her and on Susan, and seeing the latter, concluded they were both servant maids.

“A bad day this for walking muddy roads,” said one, addressing Susan.

“Yes, sir,” replied Susan, with an air of

dignity, determined not to enter into any conversation.

"They are maids only," said the other gentleman, in French, to his companion. So being under no constraint, they called to Martha to get them something to drink for it was "piercingly cold;" adding, "they would pay for it handsomely."

Martha soon entered with a black bottle and glasses.

"Could we have hot water and sugar, Miss?" asked one.

"And plenty of both?" added the other, gaily.

Charlotte would have given worlds to escape from the room, but she feared to pass lest she might be recognised, and she sat, awaiting the ending of the shower, in no enviable state of mind.

"Come, Hervey," said his companion, "brew us a tumbler each of punch, which you are

such an adept in mixing since your exile in Erin's isle."

"And drinking, too," replied Harvey.

"Harvey—Harvey," thought Charlotte, and she stole a glance from under her bonnet, and saw the officer who, on the night of her first ball at home, spoke so praisingly of her countrywomen.—How many recollections his appearance awakened,—her happiness that night,—her fond parents,—her desertion of them,—and a tear sprang to her eye; she determined he should not recognise her, so she kept her seat, and continued gazing out of the window.

CHAPTER XXII.

“WHERE is your wife, Roland?” asked his father, gaily, on his entering the breakfast room, and not seeing Charlotte there. “Your mother is just coming down to give us breakfast.”

“I left her more than an hour since in her dressing room, sir,” replied Roland, colouring highly. “I dare say she will be down soon.”

"I dare say she was tired from her long drive, yesterday," said Barton, "she seemed very much so last night."

"You had better call her down, Roland; I am anxious for her Christmas greeting," said Mr. Percie.

Roland very reluctantly left the room; he slowly ascended the stairs, opened the door of their bed-room, and called, "Charlotte," inside it was her dressing-room, the door of which was closed; he knocked at it, and no sound could he hear, he felt a degree of tremor creeping over him, he remembered his hastiness in parting with her.—Could she have fainted? he opened the door, and started when he saw the room empty. On the hearth rug were a pair of her shoes, so small they were, Roland could scarcely fancy them his wife's, he took one up, it was marked "Charlotte;" a small table was near the fire place, a cup with a little coffee and a piece of unbroken toast were on it. "Where could she

have gone? To mass probably! and in the cold and wet! he hoped not—his poor young wife—it was very obstinate of her if she did so, and he determined to make her regret it, and with this resolve he quitted the room. On the stairs he met Mrs. Bartlett.

“I’m afraid the dear young lady will be very wet, Master Roland,” said she, kindly.

She was a very good-natured soul, and had lived in her present situation many years.

“Where is she gone, Mrs. Bartlett?” asked Roland, impatiently.

“Dear me, I thought of course you knew, sir!” she replied; “she is gone to chapel to Fenstowe, and she would walk, she did not mind the distance she said; she took Susan Hutton with her—she is nigh to it by this time.”

Roland quickly descended to the breakfast room.

“Why did you allow Charlotte to take such

a journey a day like this, Roland?" enquired his mother on his entrance.

"She went without my leave, I assure you, ma'am," answered Roland; "if she be wet or tired, I am not to blame."

"If she were bent on going to chapel," pursued Mrs. Percie, "I would have sent the carriage with her. Your father would have driven me to church in the gig. I hope she will not suffer from her rashness; she looked delicate last night," added she: "We must take care of her."

"Did Charlotte say nothing of her intentions, Roland?" asked Mr. Percie.

"She said something about her wish not to miss attending prayers to-day," replied he, "really I can't remember what—she is most blameable in having gone off in this manner."

"She is very young and very enthusiastic in her ideas, my dear boy," said Mr. Percie, "so we must excuse her first youthful failing

—if failing it can be called—you and Barton can go in the carriage to bring her back ; by leaving immediately, you would overtake her before she reach the church, at Fenstowe, and I'll engage to take your mother safely to Marthorpe.”

“ She does not deserve I should take such trouble, and, indeed, I will not,” exclaimed Roland: “ my mother must not be deprived of her carriage, and Charlotte must learn to *obey*.”

“ Did you desire her not to go ?” enquired his father.

“ I told her it was my wish she should remain at home,” answered Roland, “ and I hope she may be taught a lesson. Barton, I beg you will allow her to find her way back without your aid,” and Roland finished his breakfast in silence, and then quitted the room.

“ Roland seems much annoyed,” said his

mother: "Barton, you will not go to meet Charlotte, of course," continued she.

"It would annoy Roland more if I did," said he.

Richard Leslie, who, since Emma's death, had remained at Marthorpe Vicarage, heard the conversation in silence, but determined not to permit his new cousin to return alone. He went to the stables, and there secured a horse; this he assisted in harnessing to the gig, and, in great haste lest his errand might be discovered and prevented, he drove off quickly by a back avenue, to avoid discovery; after a considerable round, he gained the high road to Fenstowe, and despite the very heavy rain and storm, he urged on the horse to its full speed, up hill and down hill were all alike—he drove furiously along. For some miles he got on gaily, but descending a hill, from the top of which, the cottage in which Charlotte was, was visible, the horse stumbled and

fell—the shaft was broken, and Richard saved himself from being thrown out, by grasping the seat firmly. The horse, rather tired from the violent driving, quietly pulled up, and poor Richard bewailed the accident in mournful tones for several minutes. “If I had ropes I’d soon mend it,” said he. There was no house by the way side, and after a long delay, he got the shaft apparently together by means of the lash of the whip, his pocket handkerchief cut into strings, and his hat band; he surveyed his work very much pleased, he got cautiously in, and drove very gently on a short way, when a jerk of the wheel over some stones, destroyed his mending, and the shaft broke again, rendering the second break worse than the first. Richard got out, drew the vehicle on one side of the road, mounted the horse, and proceeded up a green lane, to a farm house, where he, after some parleying and a good price, obtained some ropes and the assistance of the farmer’s

sons. After several efforts, they succeeded in rendering the gig fit to travel. Richard recompensed them for their trouble, and looking at his watch, found it was past twelve o'clock. "I cannot now hope to overtake Charlotte, so I may drive slowly," thought Richard, and following this notion, he went gently forward, and, indeed, if he had been very anxious to go on at full speed, his steed was inclined only to move on slowly, and the state of his whip gave the tired animal the advantage over him. He did not reach Fenstowe until after one o'clock, and driving up to the principal hotel, he gave the horse in charge to an ostler, asking if the vehicle could be mended in an hour: he was told not, it being Christmas day, and all engaged at divine service; could he get a vehicle to harness the horse to: Not at that hotel, and Richard sought through the town. After a search of more than an hour, he procured a post-chaise, and in this, he drove up to the hotel where

he had first stopped; here he ordered luncheon, and gave his horse and gig in charge to the hotel keeper, begging both might be taken good care of, until the next day. He got into the chaise delighted at having at last secured such a pleasant way of travelling, for Charlotte.

‘Where to, your honour?’ enquired the driver.

“To the Catholic Chapel,” replied Richard, throwing himself back with a feeling of great satisfaction.

“Catholic Chapel!” said the man, “I knows no such a place; ’tis the church he means,” and off he drove, and stopped at the church gate.

“This is the church,” said Richard, who had been several times there at service.

“Yes, sir,” answered the driver, “is not it here you told me to come to?”

“No,” said Richard, “the Catholic Chapel.”

“ Oh ! chapel,” quoth the man, “ I knows,” and he ascended the box, and stopped next at a Methodist Chapel.

Richard had never been in a Catholic Church, so he was unacquainted with the forms of worship of that religion : he entered, the congregation were all kneeling, and some one was praying aloud, evidently an extempore prayer. Richard had heard of the altars and lights and images, used in Catholic Chapels, and he looked around, but could see none. He stood gazing to try and discover Charlotte among the crowd, when he felt himself touched on the shoulder, and an elderly lady desired him to join with the godly, in offering to the Lord, the tribute of his homage—Richard knelt. The priest, as he supposed, continued his prayer, the sense and words of which, were quite thrown away upon him, for he was eagerly watching every bonnet, in the hope that some one shaded Charlotte’s face. The prayer ended—it had continued a

long time—the congregation all rose from their knees, and Richard took his station at the door, to watch them as they passed. A lady came closely veiled : she was in mourning, so was Charlotte. He bent forward to look at her closely ; she stopped at the porch door, and Richard, almost certain of her identity, said softly, “I came to bring you back, Mrs. Percie.”

“You mistake me, sir!” said the lady, haughtily ; “I am not Mrs. Percie.”

“Pardon me, madam,” said Richard, “I mistook you for a cousin.”

The lady raised her veil, and discovered a very comely set of features, but quite unlike those of our heroine.

“I beg to apologise,” continued Richard ;—and, seeing the lady hesitate, he added, “can I be of any service, madam?”

“None, sir, thank you,” replied she,—“I wait for my father ;” and through the crowd

advanced towards her the supposed priest, whose arm she took.

Richard looked his astonishment.

"May I ask, sir," said Richard, respectfully, "if this be the Catholic Chapel?"

"The Popish Chapel!—the Just Lord forbid," said the man he addressed, fervently;—"it is the chapel of the congregation of blessed evangelicals—a pure and holy sect, whose ——"

"Pardon me, sir," interrupted Richard, "I am in great haste, can you direct me to this Popish Chapel?"

"Young man, I would not send thee to perdition," said he, solemnly.

Richard bowed, stepped into the chaise, and drove off, desiring his driver to find out the way to the Catholic place of worship, promising a reward if he did so.

The promise of money soon brightened the man's intellects; he stopped at a corner of

a street, and hearing some Irish men talking near the chaise, Richard knowing most of the poorer classes in that country were Catholics, asked one of them to shew him the way to their chapel.

"Ah! then, that I will, and welcome, sir, but may be, 'tis coming to mass you are, and sure that same is over this hour."

"Is the chapel near?" asked Richard.

"Oh, quite convaynient to your honor, here hard by; in the next street—and a hole of a place 'tis too; but 'tis the heart the Almighty looks to when we pray, and not the place we pray in."

Richard had left his chaise and followed his conductor on foot to the chapel, which was extremely small, and only three persons were in it; these, he soon convinced himself, were strangers to him; and he did not stop to examine the edifice, but quickly regained his chaise. He held out a shilling to his guide, but poor Pat refused it, saying, "he would be

sorry to let the gentleman pay him for what was a pleasure to him—long life to the young gentleman.”

“If I go back to luncheon Charlotte will be near Marthorpe Vicarage, before I overtake her, but I must pay for it,” thought he, “so I may as well swallow a few mouthfuls,” and with this determination, he managed to eat surprisingly well in a few minutes, and then having paid his bill, got into his chaise and urged the driver to his full speed, he reached Marthorpe Vicarage without meeting Charlotte or her attendant. Nor had she returned when he arrived there. His uncle came out to the door to meet him, and to him he related his adventures as briefly as possible.

“You had better return to meet this giddy wife of yours, Roland,” said Mr. Percie, who sought him in his room, after relating Richard’s rambles in search of her.

“No, father,” said Roland, “I will not; but Barton can go if he be willing.”

"I will make her sorry for this," thought he, as his father left him again alone.

Barton and Richard very good naturedly set off to seek poor Charlotte.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"It is two miles from here to Fenstowe, is it not, Harvey," asked his companion, "and twelve from that to the town of M——, and six from thence to your aunt's place, making in all twenty miles, no despicable drive on a day like this."

"Unfortunately, my dear fellow," replied Harvey, "it is nine miles from M—— to Rendar hall, making in all a drive of twenty three miles, you know you would stay last night with your gentle Rosalinda, so blame

me not, if we are late for the good things at my aunt's; and if my gay cousins, Lucy and Frederica should question me about our delay, you may trust to my discretion—you know we promised to reach Rendar hall yesterday evening—at this rate of going we shall not be there this evening."

"And if you attempt to tell tales about Rosalinda, I'll tell of your 'tale of love,' and the pangs of disappointment, &c." said his fellow traveller.

"Let us speak in French," said Harvey, blushing, and speaking in that language, "these maids may repeat our conversation."

Charlotte smiled.

"There is no use in quizzing me, Philip," continued Harvey, "for you know my love is married. I made a complete fool of myself certes, though she was not the wiser. At a ball at her father's she overheard a conversation Walhouse and I had; I certainly admired her, and you know I have such a silly habit

of blushing. Well, Walhouse with his jokes used to provoke me so about this 'fair Spaniard,' and I in a sober fit, one wet day, took to writing verses to Charlotte, these were found and read aloud at mess, and you may fancy I got well quizzed; it was a relief to me when our regiment changed quarters; and this fair lady I hear eloped last Autumn in Scotland, married and displeased her parents, who have not seen her since."

"Oh, you have been enquiring I see, Harvey," said his companion, jocosely.

"Why, to tell the truth, I have Philip—I may as well confess. She was a beautiful girl, and so unaffected—and then her family, so fond and so proud of her. She formed some attachment to a young officer in Exmouth last year, when she was staying there with her family. Her mother was delicate; and this choice of her's is a parson's son, and poor, I am sorry to hear for her sake. So you see, Philip, I really liked the girl; and I'll make a bargain—

you can have cousin Lucy, and I'll have cousin Frederica, to flirt with during our stay at my Aunt's, and we'll be silent about the absent and here is their health now in most potent punch.—May Charlotte be as happy as she deserves—and may Rosalinda be an old maid, if she refuse to marry Philip Gifford; and now, most puissant Philip, I do aver the rain looks as if it meant to cease, so I will away to light a cigar,” and Harvey quietly put on his outside coat and muffler and left the room; his companion soon followed his example.

Charlotte determined to try and escape from the room without their seeing her.

“Here is some compensation for your long watch, Martha,” said Charlotte, giving her some money. “Show us to the door, quietly, like a good girl;” and they effected their exit unnoticed by the gentlemen, who were both standing near the kitchen fire.

“We must lose no time now, Susan, on the

road," said Charlotte, and they both hastened forward.

Near the town the gentleman passed them in their drag, driving furiously.

"Beautiful legs and feet, that tall one has," ejaculated Harvey, as they passed. "I'd swear she was a lady, only her dress is so covered with mud."

"I remember the way to the chapel—we came hither three times last year; it is down this street," said Charlotte, stopping at the entrance to a narrow street. "You can meet me here, Susan, at two o'clock, if your prayers be over, or I will remain in the chapel until you come for me."

"I'll be with you at two, precisely, madam," said Susan.

Charlotte entered the humble chapel, and had to wait there an hour before the service commenced. When it was over it was just two o'clock, and Charlotte left with the first of the congregation, remembering how far she

had to return. She reached the end of the street, and stood looking round for Susan ;— she saw her at a distance coming towards her. The flags, from the continued hail showers, had become very slippery, and our heroine, hastening unguardedly on, slipped on them, and in falling turned her ankle and sprained it severely.

“ Oh, madam, I fear you are hurt—can you walk ?” asked Susan, eagerly.

“ I have hurt my foot,” answered Charlotte, limping on. “ I fear I cannot walk all the way back, it hurts me so much—what shall we do ?”

“ My brother lives just here, madam,” said Susan, “ if you take my arm and walk quietly you can reach his house ;” and Charlotte limped on, every step giving her extreme pain.

Susan led her into a very comfortable house, in which her brother received them very civilly.

"If you could procure me any kind of a vehicle to take me to Marthorpe Vicarage, I should be very much obliged," said Charlotte.

"I will go and try, madam ; but I fear you will have some delay here, for there are very few carriages to be had in this town."

Charlotte sat by the fire writhing in pain ; she feared to take off her boot lest she might not be able to put it on again. She remembered once a school friend of her's, having sprained her foot, and being confined to a sofa, for nearly a month. She recollected she had only a fortnight to stay at Marthorpe Vicarage.

Susan's attentions were unremitting, once she was out of the room, a chaise drove by, and Charlotte rose from her seat, fancying it was the vehicle for her, but the pain so increased from standing, she had to resume it immediately. Susan brought in some biscuits

and a bottle of currant wine, of both of which Charlotte partook, though slightly, for appetite she felt none. A long hour and a half passed, the tantalizing chaise had rattled by three times, still Susan's brother had not returned: four o'clock came, and soon after it he drove up, in an old fly, which, he assured Charlotte, was the only vehicle he could get to hire for love or money; the horse too was old, so Charlotte feared it would be very late before she arrived at her destination. However she thanked him, and assisted by Susan, she with difficulty got into it, and they set off at a slow pace; on they jogged, darkness soon surrounded them, the wind howled, and the rain fell heavily, and an occasional moan from poor Charlotte, was the only break to the dreary silence. In ascending a hill, about two miles from the vicarage, the vehicle stopped: Charlotte called out to know what was the matter, fearing some new delay; the door

was opened, and Barton Percie, exclaimed:—

“Oh ! Charlotte, how you have frightened us—here is Richard, who has spent the whole day chasing you, in Fenstowe.”

“And Roland ?” asked Charlotte.

“I left him gloomily brooding over the fire, in your room,” said Barton ; “come, don’t delay—it is late—give me your arm.”

“I must take time, my dear Barton,” replied she, softly, “I fear I have sprained my foot.”

Very carefully they assisted her to the chaise, she did not allow a single complaint to escape her lips. Richard recounted his adventures, and she accounted for having missed him. They soon reached the vicarage ; it was nearly seven o’clock, Charlotte felt herself tremble, her father-in-law came out to meet her, and heard with regret, of her accident.

“The next day, Charlotte, you attend your

chapel," said he, seriously, "Roland will accompany you to the door. We must not scold you now though, seeing you are in pain, I hope it is not much."

"It is excessive," said she, faintly "I wish I were in my own room."

Barton and Richard came forward, and with great caution they raised Charlotte up, and took her to her room in their arms. Roland was not there. Mrs. Percie came up quickly, she kindly took off Charlotte's cloak and bonnet, and refrained from saying a word of reproach, seeing what pain she suffered. She tried to take off the boot on the injured foot, but so dreadfully swelled had it become, she feared to trust her.

"Barton," said she, "tell Roland to come up, I want him.—We must send to Marthorpe for Mr. Price.—Tell your father too to come up."

After some delay, Mr. Percie came up alone,

he took Charlotte's hand, and it was burningly hot—he felt her pulse, it beat wildly. “I am something of an Esculapius. Charlotte, let me see your foot—with a pair of good scissors I will undertake to cut off the boot without hurting you—will you let me try?”

“Most willingly, my dear sir,” replied Charlotte gently—but I am giving you such trouble—you cannot think how much I regret——”

“Make Roland come up,” whispered Mr. Percie to his wife, “he would not stir for me.”

Mrs. Percie went down and vainly endeavoured to reason Roland out of his feelings of annoyance towards his wife.

In the meantime, Mr. Percie proceeded quietly with his operation; and Charlotte bore the pain without a murmur—the boot was taken off, but the foot was terribly swelled.

"Would you not like to go to bed, Charlotte," asked Mrs. Percie entering the room, "you must feel great fatigue—I have sent for Mr. Price, our village apothecary, and I should like to have you comfortably settled in bed before he comes."

"If you leave me to the care of good Mrs. Bartlett, dear Mrs. Percie, and go to dinner, I should," answered Charlotte, "and when you return, you will find me quite easy; and ask Roland to come to me for one minute," whispered she, "and if he come," thought she, "I'll not mind the pain."

But his resolve was taken, and come he would not—he felt he had been treated badly, and he determined to make Charlotte feel so.

Charlotte bore all Mr. Price's applications most heroically—the foot was leeches and cupped. Mrs. Percie kindly attended her and bandaged.

"I will call early to-morrow, Mrs. Percie," said Mr. Price, taking his departure—"I would recommend you, madam," added he, addressing Charlotte, "to keep yourself as cool and quiet as possible, and of course not to get out of bed before I see you to-morrow. I think a soporific quite necessary, so I shall send you one up from the village as soon as possible," and wishing both ladies "good night," Mr. Price withdrew.

Charlotte listened to every footstep on the stairs, hoping to see her husband enter, but he came not—and long before the composing draught reached the vicarage, she had sunk into a dreamless sleep, from mere exhaustion.

Mrs. Percie administered the draught, and soon saw her sink again into a profound slumber.

It was late when Roland entered his room, and he did so noiselessly; he left it next

morning before poor Charlotte had awakened from her deep sleep. Her first thought was her husband, she started up, and called his name, but he was not there. She remembered yesterday's adventures, and tears flowed plentifully from her eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DURING the night, the wind changed to the north-west, and Roland, when he looked out in the morning, saw the country covered with snow. "I'll have a good day's shooting," said he to the servant, who was arranging the breakfast table; "bring me up some coffee," and before nine o'clock, Roland was enjoying his favourite sport, whilst his wife was suffering from his neglect of her, even more than from the sprain, though her foot was ex-

tremely painful. Mrs. Percie felt for the young wife, when she learned that her son had gone out shooting. She told it to Charlotte, and had she scanned her countenance, she would have seen how pale she became: though her only remark was, she hoped he would have good sport.

Mr. Price arrived early, and advised Charlotte to remain quietly in bed.

"The sprain might be very tedious in its cure if she did not keep perfectly quiet," he said.

She determined to follow his advice very strictly.

After breakfast Mr. Percie came to see her.

"Did you make up your little quarrel with Roland, this morning?" asked he, gaily, as he seated himself near her bed, and took her hand.

"I was provokingly drowsy all the morning," replied Charlotte, blushing; "indeed,

I did not awake until long past nine o'clock—and last night I was so overpowered with sleep, I merely remember Mrs. Percie giving me a draught."

"Roland will bring you in some peace-offerings in the shape of woodcocks," said he, "and then you'll kiss and make friends, as the children say."

"Oh, indeed, my dear Mr. Percie, I was the offender, and I feel Roland has reason to be displeased with me."

"Certainly," answered he, "it was a very girlish freak, to say the least of it, to go off seven miles with only a female attendant, on such a day as yesterday was—without your husband's sanction—and when you might have judged that your mother-in-law would have willingly given you the carriage, to take you to Divine Service. By the articles of our faith we are taught to believe the 'Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.' But

again, the XVIII. article, says: 'They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out to us, only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.' We must charitably hope none remain wilfully in error, and that all 'through the name of Jesus Christ will be saved that live the lives of christians.' My dear child you will think I am reading you a regular homily, but your future life is to be passed amid Protestants, and I wish to speak seriously to you, on religion. You have been born and reared a Roman Catholic, and I hope you will always live up to the dictates of your religion: you shall have, I promise you, free will in the exercise of its precepts, and if any doubts should arise in your mind, as to its truth or freedom

from error, you shall have unbiassed instructions from me, as far as in me lies. I believe, most firmly, my faith to be the true one, and if I did not—if I entertained the slightest doubt relative to its doctrines, I assure you, solemnly, I would seek the truth, and leave this home, cost me what it may—religion is too sacred to be thought of, in comparison, to any worldly feeling. This world and its passions and vanities speedily vanish, but religion looks beyond, and teaches us that it is not for a few years of strife we live here below that we have been created. I would regret, Charlotte, to see you unadvisedly leave the faith of your childhood; the love you bear your husband may urge you to do so, but let not such a motive prevail—let each serve God faithfully in their own faith. I have affected you, my dear child," added he kindly, seeing tears rolling down Charlotte's cheeks.

"It is your kindness that has done so, my dear Mr. Percie," said Charlotte, gently.

"I hope to merit a continuance of it.—My religion, believe me, I shall not leave—at least, I trust not—it is a link that binds me to my youthful days—my home—my country."

"Even higher motives than these Charlotte," said Mr. Percie, "must lead you to continue a Catholic, or your religion will not be free from worldly feelings.—Could you," added he, after a short pause, "summon up courage sufficient to write the letter to your parents we spoke of the night before last?"

"With your kind assistance I think I can," answered she, smiling—she was nervously anxious to have it finished before Roland returned.

Mr. Percie brought her writing materials, and Mrs. Percie propped her up in bed with pillows, and kindly folded a warm shawl

round her; her hand trembled violently, and tears would force themselves down her cheeks at every appeal to her parents' feelings.

"I feel so weak, dear Mr. Percie," said she softly, "I cannot refrain my tears."

"They do honour to your good heart, my dear Charlotte," said he, "I should be sorry to think you felt your fault less."

"Perhaps the exertion is too much for Charlotte," said Mrs. Percie, addressing her husband.

"Oh, no, indeed it is not," replied Charlotte hurriedly—"the letter is just finished."

Four o'clock struck, she thought Roland ought to return, so she endeavoured to dry her tears and succeeded in finishing the letter, and gave it into Mr. Percie's hands, with many thanks for his kindness. She was then left alone—her thoughts wandered to her happy fire-side, at Coomearne—the joyous

tones of her little sisters—their happiness in inspecting their Christmas boxes—her gentle mother's smile—her father's hearty laugh—Manuel's happy face—and Miss Malden's quiet enjoyment—and poor Ellen her faithful maid, whom she had left at Edinburgh barracks, not wishing to add to the expense of their travelling, fearing to annoy her husband—and that husband so devotedly loved—he lay there in stillness and solitude, thinking of him—of them all.

When one feels they have given way to ill-temper, they feel a degree of annoyance against themselves; Roland had scarcely left the inclosures of the vicarage grounds, before he regretted his hastiness in leaving the house without seeing his wife, and trying to allay the pain, he knew she suffered—for during the night he had heard her frequently moan in her sleep, but he consoled himself, saying, "I can't now return until dinner hour," and he pursued his

way, but very bad sport attended him, for though he saw several birds, he succeeded in shooting only one, and vexed and tired, he returned to the vicarage: he went quietly up to his own room, he opened the door gently, there was no candle, but the fire burned brightly, and not fancying his wife was in bed, he walked across the room to her dressing room.

Charlotte started up in bed at seeing him; "Roland, I am so delighted you are come!" said she, as he folded her in his arms; "dearest Roland," murmured she, "I have indeed been to blame, but I see you forgive me."

"Your fault has been punished severely, I am afraid, Charlotte," said he: "I would not speak to you last night, I was so really displeased, but now I must forgive you, I suppose; does your foot pain you much?"

"It did, last night," replied Charlotte,

smiling, "but then your being away pained me more, my dear Roland—to day it is still swelled, and Mr. Price desired me to remain in bed, but I hope in some few days it will be quite well, I intend to take great care of it."

"It is most provoking accident," said Roland; "you will not, I dare say, be able to stir out while we remain here, and you will expect me, I suppose, to play the part of lover to you."

"No: indeed, Roland," said she, sweetly, "I will expect only an occasional visit from from you. I hope you will go out every day, to shoot or ride, as if you had no wife—only to take care of yourself for that wife's sake."

"I ought to be happy in having such a wife," thought Roland; he kissed her and went down to dinner in very good humour with himself.

Next day Charlotte was allowed, by Mr. Price, to sit up on a sofa, in her dressing room, and when Roland placed her on it, he thought she looked really beautiful. Her new relations were very kind and attentive to her, and in occasional visits from each of the family the days of her banishment, as Mr. Percie called it, passed very pleasantly to her.

Roland, the first day of her getting up, wanted to remain all day with her, but she would not allow him, insisting on his devoting some of the day to taking exercise in the open air, and she argued her right to make him take care of himself, so sweetly, he could not find it possible to frown upon her.

In a week she was convalescent enough to come down stairs aided by her husband, and so carefully, for his sake, did she take care of herself, that at the end of the fort-

night, she was able to leave Marthorpe Vicarage with him; having endeared herself to each of her new relations, by her unfailing amiability.

CHAPTER XXV.

It was the last night of the year, and a cheerless cold night it was—the wind howled in fitful squalls and rattled the windows in their frames, at Coomcare Park.

“You will have a bad night, going to W——, to this ball, Manuel,” said his father, addressing him, as they sat tête-à-tête together after dinner.

“That reminds me that I have not much time to lose, my dear father,” replied Manuel,

“for I promised to join the Mastertons at tea,” and finishing his wine he rose to prepare for his departure.

It was a very comfortable room, the dining-room, at Coomcarne Park: the fire in the ample grate burned brightly—the closely-drawn window curtains excluded all air from without—and on the hearth rug lay an old dog, evidently enjoying the warmth of his situation; he occasionally stretched himself with a pleased air. Mr. O’Carroll moved his chair near the fire—the dog raised himself from his recumbent posture, and looking up in his face, wagged his tail. Mr. O’Carroll patted him fondly—“Poor old Sam, I love you well for your Mistress’ sake—she left you, but you shall be fed and guarded—you are all she left us to remember her,” and a tear stole down his cheek. “Poor Charlotte,” continued he, musingly, “so beautiful and good you were, it is no wonder *he* should love you, and well must you have loved him when

you left the parents that idolized you for his *his* sake. My poor child, you were carefully reared in every comfort, such a night as this in cold barracks will make you think perhaps of your once happy and comfortable home—of your father and mother—their care and their love—”

The door opened and a servant entered with the post bag. Mr. O'Carroll took out its contents placed them on the table, and gave the empty bag to the servant. He took up one letter—assuredly it was Charlotte's writing—the hand trembled when it was written—the address was not very plain, for the letter had been “*missent*”—the seal was black—and the father trembled. He sat down with it in his hand, he drew his chair towards the table, and broke the seal—and the letter was from Charlotte; such a letter as the father felt he was proud his child wrote, but it moved not his resolve.

“I cannot forgive her!” was his exclamation.

tion, and he put the letter into his bosom, and went into the drawing room to show it to his wife.

A pretty sight awaited him, Mary and Camilla were dancing together, a figure dance, and both looked so happy and so lovely—their little cheeks flushed by the exercise, and their eyes sparkling. Miss Malden was playing a lively air for them on the piano, which had been brought into the drawing room ; for since Charlotte's marriage the music room was deserted. Mrs. O'Carroll reclined on a sofa, watching her darlings with great pleasure, and ever and anon applauding them. Mr. O'Carroll waited until the dance was ended, and then rewarding each of the children with a kiss, he begged his wife to come with him to the dining room.

"No bad news, I trust, dear Henry, of either of the absent ones," said Mrs. O'Carroll, faintly.

"None, my love," replied her husband, and he gave her a chair near his own, and he read to her Charlotte's letter,

"The dear child," said her mother, kindly, "indeed she deeply repents of her fault; but I know your determination on this head, my dear Henry, so I shall urge nothing in her defence."

"I am glad her new relations are kind to her, my dear wife," said Mr. O'Carroll, "love her they must when they know her well."

"I am sorry, Henry, you don't know the Percies," observed Mrs. O'Carroll;—"you could better judge than I can, what poor Charlotte's chance of happiness is among them."

"My dear Camilla," replied he, "I am really rejoiced I do not. Did I know them as you do, I might be led, through a feeling of etiquette to them, to forgive the undutiful conduct of my child, and this would be erring

against my principles. I know *her* husband but slightly—you know how engrossed my mind was at that time with the hopes of Lord Archgolle's attachment to Charlotte. I never dreamed my child had thrown away her young affections—thrown away I say, for the man that could urge her to sacrifice her first duties to his love, must be unworthy her love."

Manuel here entered to say "good night."

"Read that letter, my son," said his father, extending Charlotte's letter to him, and Manuel did so—"make no comment on it," continued he, for it is useless, and he took the letter from Manuel's hand and threw it into the fire, and yet when he saw it blazing away he regretted his hastiness; the signature—"your gratefully attached, though offending child, Charlotte Percie"—remained on a black part of the fire, and was there before him, pleading powerfully in behalf of the writer.

"Here is a letter from Henry," said Ma-

nuel, who had been eagerly examining the contents of the post-bag.

Mr. O'Carroll raised the poker, gave the fire several stirs, and poor Charlotte's letter, which had cost her so many tears, was all destroyed.

Henry wrote in the gayest style, wishing them all very many happy returns of the new year. In conclusion, he mentioned that having had a cough during most part of the winter, he was obliged to remain much within doors, and to take great care of himself. A doctor, who had attended him, recommended some months' change of air, in his native land, when the spring weather came, and Henry said with his father's leave, he would take some vacation among them, in April. His father wrote that night to beg of him to do so as soon as he could, and cautioned him to take every care of himself.

With Henry's letter came one from the

Professor, the head master of the college, extolling his talents, amiability, and character most highly; he had obtained several honours though such a short time there, and the parents with delight read these praises.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ROLAND and Charlotte arrived in Liverpool, the second day after they left Marthorp Vicarage, and Roland in passing along a quay, met Lord Archgolle, who turned pale in recognizing him, and stopped, extended his hand, and faltered out his congratulations on his marriage. He did not ask for his wife, but hurriedly bid Roland good bye, saying he was going next morning to Durham, to attend the death-bed of an aged uncle of his.

"We were going that way, too," thought Roland, when they parted, but I promise you I'll not give you the pleasure of our company on your journey. Just then seeing a vessel by the quay side, with a sign up, marking it for Glasgow; he went on board, and finding it was to sail at high tide next day, he took places for his wife and himself on board; the accommodations were very tolerable, and he knew Charlotte would be pleased at any thing that pleased him. He returned briskly to the hotel, and passing a private room, the door of which was open, he heard Lord Archgolle's voice within; he hurried on, and reached his own sitting room.

Charlotte had just finished a letter to his mother, and she asked if he had any message to send home.

"Will you let me read the letter, Charlotte?" enquired he, laying his hand on it.

"With pleasure, dear Roland," replied she,

gaily ; “ you know I can have no secrets from you.”

He read through the letter. She possessed the talent of writing well—agreeably, without the superabundance of words that generally grace young ladies’ letters. What a mania for letter-writing some young misses are infected with ? And how some labour to use every word that can be pressed into their service.—where one would do using three, oftentimes more. Roland smiled—his own peculiar smile—as he gave back the letter, and said, “ my mother must be gratified by this account of our travels ; but we are not going back the same way we came, as you say here.”

“ How glad I am of that, dear Roland,” exclaimed his wife—I do love variety. How are we to frame one course to our quarters in ‘ Auld Reekie ? ’ ”

“ Why in a way that will please from its variety, at least, Charlotte,” replied Roland. I have taken berths in a trading vessel bound

from here to Glasgow, and thence we will proceed to Edinburgh, which is only forty-three or forty-four miles north-west of it, and thus we shall save the long land journey."

Dinner was then brought in, and Charlotte exerted all her powers of agreeability to entertain her husband during the evening.

"I have a mind to bring you some one to take tea with you, Charlotte," said Roland, gaily—for he felt proud of his wife, so handsome did she look. "An old friend of yours," continued he, whom I met to-day, one that is staying in this hotel. Are you not very curious to know who it is?"

"If it be any one I knew at home—I mean Coomcarne Park," said she, eagerly, "I shall be delighted to see either him, or her—perhaps one of the Mastertons."

"No—guess again," said Roland.

"Captain Harvey," guessed Charlotte, blushing brightly.

"Who is he?—I don't know him," said Roland, hastily; "is he another of your devoted admirers?"

Charlotte paused—but she was so thoroughly ingenuous, that she told her husband in her own playful way, of her acquaintance with him—and of her rencontre on Christmas-day, she ended by saying, "I tell you this because I like you, dear Roland to know every thought of mine."

He did not look quite pleased, and he became silent; tea was brought in and taken away without an allusion to their acquaintance, and Charlotte, whatever curiosity she felt, and she was woman enough to feel a little share of that womanly failing, repressed it. In going to her bed room, she was gratified however, for at the end of a long passage, with a bedroom candle in his hand, she saw advancing quickly, Lord Archgolle—he was not near enough to recognise her—she turned into a room next her, closed the door, and let him

pass, she then quietly gained her own room, and told this to Roland, a frown was her only reward.

Poor Charlotte, how devotedly you loved your careless husband—with all the fervor of your young warm heart.

The next morning, after a hasty breakfast, Roland hurried Charlotte on board the ship, and they found the vessel was not to sail until ebb tide, at two o'clock. The vessel was small, the cabin into which Charlotte was shown, was not above four feet square, and in it were two berths, miserably confined they looked, and dirty too; but she did not complain; a short inconvenience she thought of no consequence. A sister-in-law of the Captain's, a delicate creature, with a baby, going to join her husband, in Glasgow, was to share the cabin with Charlotte. The cabin which Roland was to occupy with seven or eight others, was of tolerable size. Charlotte's foot was not yet sufficiently strong to allow

her to walk, so she sat on deck watching the busy scene around her, and her husband strolled about the town. At length the anchor was weighed, the crew all on board, and the vessel floated gently off; a slight ripple alone played on the water, and smoothly with a scarcely perceptible motion, the ship sailed down the Mersey.

"I hope it will blow fresher than this, Captain Waring, when we get outside Rock Point," said a man near Charlotte, addressing the Captain of the vessel.

"It's likely to keep calm enough to-night," replied the Captain, "what wind there is, is blowing steadily off shore."

"When could we reach Glasgow, with a favourable wind?" asked Roland, somewhat impatiently."

"This is—let me see—Thursday: well Friday, Saturday.—Why the voyage may be short and may be long; we ought to do it in two days, but contrary winds do spring up,

and we may be four days about it," and with this satisfactory intelligence, the Captain walked off to give some directions to the sailors.

While there was any light, Charlotte remained on deck with her husband, and felt quite amused, watching the various vessels that passed from many a clime, and then the shores on either side, studded with villas, and she thought of her own land, away in the distant sea.

"That is Formby Point now before us, Madam," said the Captain to Charlotte, as he assisted her along the deck. The vessel began to rock a little unpleasantly, and she wished to go down to the cabin. "I hope we shall make good way to night," and he called to his sister-in-law, at the cabin door, and desired her to take every care of Mrs. Percie, who was ere long stretched, or rather cramped into her small berth, dreadfully sick

with that overpoweringly, sickening malady—sea sickness. She had no idea of fear, but now she longed to be again on land, or even breathing the pure air on the deck; but to stir was impossible; the vessel rolled, and the cabin was in darkness, her companion slept soundly, and Charlotte thought the night would never end; yet it was a night of enjoyment compared to the next one. Towards morning she dosed, but her sleeping thoughts were disturbed by frightful dreams, and a gentle hand laid on her shoulder made her start and awake: it was her companion, Mrs. Waring, who was dressed.

“You were moaning so frightfully, Mrs. Percie,” said she, “I thought it better to awake you. Will you take something? a cup of coffee, I would recommend. It is near eleven o’clock; if you were up and dressed, and on deck, you would feel quite well.”

Charlotte thanked her, took some coffee,

but it was late in the afternoon when her lady would allow her to leave the cabin, and then she had to be assisted on deck. The Captain was most attentive to her ; she hoped they had made good way, during the night.

“Very good, Madam,” said he, “consider the wind ; this morning the breeze freshened. See, there is Rossall Point, we are leaving behind us.—That bay is Lancaster Bay.—You see the opening of the river Loyne, on which the town of Lancaster stands.—Farther on is the Bay of Morcambe.—You see the Island in the distance, that is Walney Island.”

“I took a canter along the sands, with Manuel, last July, by the edge of Morcambe Bay,” said Charlotte to Roland, who was just then standing near her ; Mamma was fatigued, and we stopped to rest two days at Lancaster, and my dear father ordered me a long ride.”

"Which you enjoyed very much, I dare say," said Roland, "notwithstanding my absence."

"I lived in the hope of meeting you soon, you know, Roland," replied she playfully, "and therefore sweet hope gave me enjoyment."

The twilight was deepening into night, when the ship passed Walney Island. The sun had sunk with a deep, red light in his ocean bed, tinging all the eastern hemisphere with his parting rays, and the clouds, glowed in a rich, crimson beauty.

"In my own land," thought Charlotte, "the beautiful sun sinks to rest;" she gazed on his fading light. How sweetly since those days the poet Lover has written in his own exquisite song, "The Land of the West."

"The sun in the gorgeous east chaseth the night,
When he riseth, refreshed in his glory and might;
But where doth he go when he seeks his sweet rest?
Oh! doth he not haste to the beautiful west?"

The Captain approached, looking very thoughtful.

"How luminous the waters appear, Roland," exclaimed Charlotte. "I never remarked them so before."

"This appearance surely portends wind, Madam," said Captain Waring, hearing her observation; "this phenomenon is frequently seen in the Mediteranean sea, and in warm climates, seldom indeed in winter time. I have rarely observed it in these seas, and never before but in Summer or Autumn.—Some knowing ones will tell you this shining light is caused by the phosphorus that all the putrid matter in the seas emit; others from the electric fluid, which, in the process of evaporation rapidly evolves; and others again say, the waters are filled with myriads of small luminous insects, which shine out this way: for my part, I only know that it foretells a storm."

"Not to-night, I trust, Captain Waring," said Charlotte, rather alarmed.

"Oh, madam, we'll brave it gallantly," answered he, "you must not fear; and if you took refuge in your cabin it is the safest place."

Charlotte went below, and not long was the Captain's conjecture without proof of its truth, and she, fearing to undress, sat on a chair by her berth, feeling rather nervous. Midnight came and brought such a gale as made the stoutest heart on board quake. The sea rolled in billows, mountains high, and the ship was tossed to and fro, the sails were soon rent to pieces, the rudder disabled, and the unmanageable vessel was borne along—now drifting on the surface of the surging waves, now almost engulfed by the raging element. The Captain came to Charlotte's cabin, pale with dread; his sister-in-law had risen from her berth, and held her baby in

her arms, convulsively sobbing forth her fears. Charlotte was on her knees, trying to invoke the Almighty Ruler of the angry ocean for their safety.

"You must feel terror, Mrs. Percie," said the Captain, kindly; "it is an awful night, and Providence alone now guides us. None can remain on deck, and where we all may be in the morning God alone knows; the men are prepared to expect the worst."

"My husband—my husband!" faintly ejaculated Charlotte; her companion sobbed loudly.

"He was asleep till the last awful squall," replied the Captain; "now I'll send him to you, as you are both up," and a tear glistened in his eye as he sent Roland to his beautiful young wife; and through that long, long night, where instant death awaited them in momentary expectation, Charlotte's heroic resignation calmed his feelings. She prayed,

long and fervently, by his side ; she forgot herself—she soothed her companion—she lulled the frightened baby to sleep—and at each visit of the Captain, he left her thinking what a treasure her husband possessed. He had assembled all his men in the large cabin—he read prayers for them, and calmly each one waited the fate that seemed inevitable. To be taken thus in the prime and vigor of manhood from the midst of life is bitter, when health is strong—and many a tear gleamed that night in that frail ship, when home and its inmates were thought on. The morning dawned at length, and the Power that ruled the waves, reduced them to comparative tranquillity.

“ We may be saved, Mrs. Percie,” said the Captain, smiling, putting his head to her cabin—“ for the wind is lulling.”

“ Oh, thank God,” sobbed Charlotte, “ all the firmness of the night giving way.”

As the day brightened, the angry sea calmed, and at mid-day the ocean shone in beautiful tranquillity, and the disabled vessel lay on its bosom, but a useless thing almost—the chain plate had given way—the rudder was gone—the sails rent in ribbons.

“It was a mercy indeed we were not swamped,” thought the Captain, eyeing the scene of desolation from the well washed deck—his cargo had been all swept overboard—he looked around, they were far from land, at neither side could he descry it, his only hope lay in some vessel picking them up.—The stillness that reigned around was horrid in their present dismantled state, and his oldest sailor could devise no remedy by which the ship could be rendered serviceable. The day rolled heavily on—though hope cheered many a heart in that vessel.

The night too succeeded in beautiful calmness, but none could sleep soundly—lights

were struck, and guns of distress fired at intervals during the night; the morning rose and found them still on the boundless sea, far from land. Another day and night lagged cheerlessly on, and hope began to fail many on board.

"To-morrow may bring us some relief, Captain Waring," said Charlotte sweetly, "and then we shall forget all our sufferings."

"God bless you, kind prophetess," replied he, "and may He fulfil your prophecy—for in His hands are life and death."

During those days of intense anxiety—of despair almost to many, Charlotte had a kind word, an encouraging hope to cheer each one. The Captain had many a time congratulated Roland on the possession of "this pearl beyond price," as he called her.

The Sabbath morning broke beautifully on the still, tranquil ocean. A slight ripple broke

over its glassy surface, and the vessel went gently on before the breeze. The Captain paced the deck, and vainly looked around the ocean. The blue sky alone was reflected on its bosom, and he descended to his cabin trying to hope the day would bring some help.

Printed by G. Paul, Angel Hill, Bury.

ROLAND PERCIE;

OR,

THE ELOPEMENT.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH Sq.

1846.



THE ELOPEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

CHARLOTTE was trying to argue Mrs. Waring out of a notion she begun to allow to get strong hold of her imagination, "that they would all die of hunger;" when the Captain knocked at their cabin door.

"No fear of that for at least a month Julia," said he, when he heard her fears, "we have plenty of provisions on board. Mrs. Percie, your prophecy will I am afraid prove a false

one—not a sail is in view, and we can see leagues around us, except on one point, where there is a slight haze.”

“And that haze may clear by and bye Captain,” answered Charlotte gaily, “and shew you a sail bearing down upon us.”

“We will have public prayers in the large cabin after breakfast, madam,” said the Captain, “and you and Julia will join us.”

“I cannot,” replied Charlotte, “for I am a catholic, and must say my own prayers, but, I will join you in supplicating the Almighty though in a different room.”

When all had assembled at prayers, Charlotte feeling an irresistible impulse to pray to the God of nature in the open air, ascended the deck, and knowing no human eye looked on her devotions, she knelt and prayed with fervor to the wise disposer of all—and she rose from her knees strengthened with hope. She gazed around towards the south of the vessel; the haze which dimmed the view was

gradually clearing off, and she looked and looked again for there she plainly discerned a small black speck. Oh, the joy of that hope springing up in her bosom—she hastily descended the companion ladder, and paused at the door of the cabin, the Captain's voice was raised, and Charlotte heard him read aloud the collect of the day, invoking the Lord who governed all things in heaven and earth, to hear their supplications: she felt to disturb them would be wrong, so she noiselessly went into her own cabin, took up a telescope, she had seen Roland leave there the day before, and through it looked at the black speck on the horizon—she could not be mistaken, it was a ship, evidently a large one too—how her heart throbbed; she watched it intently, and when she heard the Captain ascending on deck, she showed him the fulfilment of her promise, what a cheer rent the air from the many hearts around her, and many a blessing was uttered for her good.

The sailors in this ship heard the cheer.

"It is a Spanish build," said Captain Waring, and he was right, before evening fell the vessel had come alongside, and the Captain of it called out in a strange tongue.

"What does he say?" asked Captain Waring

"He speaks Spanish," said Charlotte, blushing to have to speak before so many, "and he asks what we require—if we be in distress."

"Can you speak Spanish, madam?" asked Captain Waring.

"Yes I can," replied Charlotte; "my mother is a Spaniard."

"Then raise your voice, my dear Charlotte," said Roland, "and tell him of our wishes."

She, wishing to please that husband, spoke loudly. "It is a Spanish vessel, laden with oil, going to Whitehaven," said Charlotte; "he wishes to know if his towing this vessel in, will do: he can accommodate some on

board—half a dozen he says, and he has provisions enough if we want any; he says too we are now midway between Ireland and England, in latitude fifty-three-and-a-half degrees, and some miles.”

“We have made no way then since Friday afternoon, but rather lost some,” said Captain Waring.”

“This Spanish Captain, asks if he can come on board,” said Charlotte.

“Surely, surely,” replied Captain Waring, “tell him so with pleasure.”

The fair interpreter gave him a welcome in her mother’s tongue. How sweet is learning in a young woman guided by common sense. Charlotte related their tale to the Spaniard, and Roland and she, Mrs. Waring, and all the merchants amounting to seven, went with him on board his vessel. Captain Waring would not leave his vessel, which was taken in tow, and Tuesday morning both entered the

harbour of Whitehaven, and they only that have felt the terrors of a threatened shipwreck, can tell the delight of the sight of land, and the feelings that glow within the heart when they tread terra firma, after the dangers of the deep sea. They all took a grateful farewell of the Spanish Captain, who presented Charlotte with an assortment of seeds, from her mother's country, as he had learned to call Spain, and gave her some directions for their culture.

Captain Waring dined with Roland and Charlotte at the hotel, the day they landed, and in parting expressed his hope they should meet again in health and happiness, "and may every blessing attend you and yours, my dear madam," said he to Charlotte, "but for your cheering words and looks, many a time my heart would have sunk within me during our dangers."

From Whitehaven the Percies proceeded

next morning to Carlisle, by Cockermouth and Wigton, and thence, as speedily as possible, to Edinburgh.

Their leave of absence had been exceeded by some days. Roland leaving Charlotte at the door of their barrack-quarters, proceeded to the officer in command to report the cause of his delay.

Charlotte ascended the stairs, wondering much that Ellen did not make her appearance; at the first landing she paused: two doors of their rooms were closed; she tried one, it was bolted; she tried the other and with no better success. She heard a hasty step on the stairs, and looking round, she saw a comely damsel, curtseying to her; a stranger she was, and she addressed her in broad Scotch. Where was Ellen—her own maid, she asked, and after some time by repeated questionings, Charlotte found she was ill—dying of fever.

Mrs. Macfarlane, the barrack master's cook

had the keys of the rooms, and Charlotte sent for her. During an illness of one of her children, Charlotte had been as kind as she could to the sick child, and Mrs. Macfarlane remembered this, and she was glad to be able to oblige Mrs. Percie.

Some days after their departure for Marthorpe Vicarage, Charlotte learned from this woman, that Ellen had been violently attacked by fever, and the doctor of the regiment pronouncing it a very infectious one, she had been removed, at once, to the hospital; and their cook getting a fright—hearing of the infection—took her departure for the country, leaving the keys to Mrs. Macfarlane. Charlotte opened her rooms, hoping to see them in as nice order as she had left them, for she remembered that more than once her husband had complained of the want of comfort and want of attention to order in some of the hotels they had stopped at.

In their sitting room the carpet was off,

the chairs and tables all in disorder, an abundance of soot had tumbled down the chimney, and the room felt damp and cold from want of air or fire. "Oh, this is dreadful," thought Charlotte: "poor Ellen was, I suppose, intending to have it so well arranged, for my return;" but she did not stop to consider long, aided by Fibbie, her new maid, who understood not the half that was said to her, Charlotte managed to get a fire blazing in the grate, the carpet was laid, the furniture set in order, and Charlotte sat down quite fatigued, to look at the result of her labours. The evening had grown into night, and she fancied the room looked as comfortable as ever. Some one knocked at the door, she ran to open it, feeling certain it was Roland: it was only Major Manning's servant, to say Mr. Percie remained to dine with his master. Charlotte would not allow herself to be sorry; she had nothing comfortable for her husband, and was delighted he would have some enjoy-

ment, and her dinner, such as Mrs. Macfarlane had assisted Fibbie in hastily preparing, was soon finished. By her assistance, a cook was hired, and Fibbie kept as her assistant, and when both rooms were well arranged, Charlotte sent for Doctor M——, the doctor of the regiment. From him she learned that poor Ellen had been reduced to the very verge of the grave, by a dreadful fever.

“She had raved incessantly of her dear young mistress,” he said, “she had quite recovered her senses, but was too ill to leave her bed,” and the doctor in reply to Charlotte’s wish to see her, said it would be worse than folly to put herself in the way of infection, that she could do no good,—that every care had been and would be taken of Ellen. “And Mrs. Percie,” added he, “if you have no fear for yourself, have some for your husband ;” he possessed penetration enough to have discovered the young wife’s love for that husband.

Very much fatigued from all her exertions, Charlotte was soon fast asleep, and when Roland entered her room, her sleep was so deep, he did not disturb her, and it was well he did not, for he was intoxicated. Major Manning, a very gay officer, had urged him to drink deeply, and next morning Charlotte waited two hours for him, at the breakfast table, a severe head ache kept him late in bed.

CHAPTER II.

A WEEK had passed on, and several nights of it Roland went out after dinner, and did not return until a late hour. One morning after breakfast he told Charlotte that Mrs. Manning, at whose house he drank tea the night before, said she intended calling on her that day to ask her to spend that evening with her, as she expected some very musical friends.

“And do you wish me to go, Roland?” enquired Charlotte.

"Certainly," replied he, "I'll go with you, the Mannings keep a very pleasant house, and this town is just now confoundedly dull.

Mrs. Manning called at a late hour. Charlotte had formerly been slightly acquainted with her and she accepted the invitation to please her husband. Major Manning, a younger son of a rich London merchant, hating the unaristocratic profession of his father, entered the army at an early age, and spent the most part of his life in foreign climes. In India, where he passed many years, he imbibed a taste for dissipation, and getting involved in pecuniary difficulties, was glad to free himself from them by marrying an heiress, whose fortune was her sole merit in his eyes. This lady had left Scotland, her native land, when young; her father had obtained a situation of great emolument in Calcutta, and was glad to find a way of providing for his large family. A few years in India left him only one daughter to leave his riches to. She was rather elderly when Major

Manning proposed for her, and she having so many years been her own mistress, accepted him, but conditionally : he was to leave the army and settle in Scotland, and her father was to live with them. Very joyfully Major Manning acceded to her wishes. They were married, and left India ; but ere they reached England her father had died, and in Edinburgh they settled. He resolved to enjoy her thousands, and she sighing for that easy control and delightfully indolent life she had quitted, determined to lead as gay a life as she could.

“ You play on the harp, Mrs. Percie, I perceive,” said Major Manning, addressing Charlotte, and glancing at her instrument when they rose to take leave.

“ I am passionately fond of music,” said Mrs. Manning, languidly. “ My next door neighbours, the Russells, who are all musicians, have promised to come to-night and send in their harp.”

"We shall have the pleasure of hearing you play, then, Mrs. Percie," observed the Major, "unless, like children, you can only read in your own book, or play on your own harp.

"I am but an indifferent performer on either my own or others' harps," said Charlotte, gaily.

"You must let your hearers judge, my dear Charlotte," exclaimed Roland, "and then if any agree in your opinion, I will arraign them as false witnesses."

"At nine we shall expect you," said the Major to Roland, who accompanied them to the door.

"Charlotte you must take particular care of your toilette to-night," said Roland to her, as they sat together after dinner, "and remember to play and sing when you are asked."

"Yes, to please you, my dear husband," answered she sweetly.

"That is what you are always trying to do, my love," said Roland fondly, "and to-night

I wish you to excel"—this was enough to urge Charlotte to use her best energies.

At Major Manning's, as they ascended the stairs, Charlotte distinguished his voice, saying to a servant: "remember, Peter, you bring plenty of wine to my room when I ring for coals."

She thought nothing of it at the time, but she recollected it afterwards.

In the drawing-room were assembled several persons, Mrs. Manning was reclining in an easy chair, and by her were seated four strangers, whom she introduced to Charlotte as her musical friends, Miss Lambert—Miss Annalda Lambert—their brothers, Mr. Allegri Lambert, and Mr. Corelli Lambert—four very grave looking personages, who looked as if they thought mirth and music did not suit.

"You have been in Italy, madam, of course?" said Mr. Allegri Lambert, addressing Charlotte in very solemn accents.

"Never," replied Charlotte.

"Miseria me giammai," exclaimed Miss Lambert.

"Ahi! Bellissima Italia," sighed Miss Annalda.

"Land of magic, realizing the brightest day-dreams of the young enthusiast," said Mr. Corelli Lambert, slapping his breast majestically.

"And don't you long to visit this beautiful Italy—this land of music?" asked Mr. Allegri.

"I should enjoy a tour through it exceedingly I am sure," replied Charlotte. "How long did you remain there?"

"Remain there," said Mr. Allegri, "it was our home since our childhood's days. We grew beneath its beautiful skies—we imbibed a love for its beauteous arts—its soul-felt music, with our growth.—How cold—how devoid of feeling seem the strains of this land, after our beautiful Italy—its music—oh, how

divine ! in it indeed breathes the soul of harmony—the dull, tame sounds of other lands, how they sicken after it.”

“Mrs. Manning told us you were a musician, she must mistake,” said Miss Lambert.

Charlotte only smiled.

“In Italy alone,” pursued she, “can the science be taught in its purity and perfection. We have been at concerts in London, such attempts at singing—Oimè—Vi ricordéte voi sorella mia?” asked she of her sisters. At the Italian Opera alone we could exist. Were you there Mrs. Pereie?”

“Once only,” answered Charlotte.

Then the sisters talked together in Italian, wondered at Charlotte’s never having travelled—one thought her pretty, the other did not.”

“How I pity you, madam,” said Corelli Lambert, “for having never tasted the sweets of Italian life.”

"You should envy me too," said Charlotte, "for having so much pleasure before me, and every pleasure you know pleases with additional force from its novelty."

The sisters continuing their discourse, began to remark very freely on Roland.

Mrs. Manning had left their circle, and Charlotte was the only stranger among the family group.

"Perhaps it is right, Miss Lambert," said she, gently, "to tell you, I understand Italian."

The ladies looked surprised, but not at all disconcerted.

"He is your husband, is he not?" said Miss Annalda—"therefore you may laugh at it."

"He is my husband," replied Charlotte, gravely, and very glad was she when the quartett took their departure to exhibit their musical powers. They had fine voices certainly, and seemed very well taught; but all

their gesticulations, Charlotte thought quite unnecessary.

"Oh, gi' me a bonnie Scotch ballad," said an old Scotch lady near Charlotte. "I dinna compreehend this outlandish talk—they were fair sousy lassies when they went abroad, but they're a most demented noo wi' their airs and graces."

"They were many years in Italy, were they not?" said Charlotte.

"They were twa in Italy, and twa in France," replied the Scotch lady quickly—and noo they ca' themselves naturaleezed Italians," and the old lady chuckled.

Mrs. Manning now advanced, and begged Charlotte would favour them with some music.

"What shall it be, dear Roland?" whispered Charlotte, *en passant* with him to the piano.

"Your prettiest Scotch ballad, in honour of our hostess's country," replied he; "and ex-

ert yourself, dear Charlotte, for my sake," and he led her to the piano. With all her might did she strive to please him, and a rapturous encore applauded her efforts.

"You must not leave the piano so soon, dear Mrs. Percie," said Mrs. Manning, roused to unwonted energy by hearing strains she remembered in her childhood, given forth so beautifully.

Charlotte sang another Scotch air—then an Irish melody.

Roland stood near her, encouraging her on.

"Will you not favour *us* with an Italian song?" asked Miss Lambert, who felt somewhat jealous of Charlotte's vocal powers, and hoped in this to eclipse her.

"She will, certainly," replied Roland, answering for her. "We will sing that duet my mother so much admires Charlotte," said he, and they sang one then highly admired.—She had learned Italian from the best

masters in Paris, and her early knowledge of Spanish gave her a facility for it. The Miss Lamberts were secretly astonished at her pronunciation.

Mr. Allegri complimented her on it, and Mr. Corelli asked if any of her relatives were Italians.

"None," she said; "her mother was Spanish,"

"Oh! I knew, senza dubbio, you had some southern blood in your veins," exclaimed he, and for the rest of the night he was highly elated by his own superior sagacity.

The Miss Russels performed after Charlotte, who quitted the piano with great delight; she looked round for Roland, and saw Major Manning in the doorway, beckoning to him, and they both left the room together. The old Scotch lady advanced, and seated herself near her, thanking her repeatedly for the "sweet bonnie ballad."

"It touched my auld heart," said she, "and

brought before my e'en the winsome blitheful days lang ago : when I was merry and young, I lost mony and mony a dear freend since ; but the song of ' Auld lang syne,' is pleasant to those that are left.—It 'minds us of happiness."

Charlotte thought of those beautiful lines of Moore's—a favourite song it was of her's—one she had sung many a time *at home* :

" When thro' life unblest we rove,
Losing all that made life dear.
Should some notes we used to love
In days of boyhood meet our ear.
Oh ! how welcome breathes the strain !
Wakening thoughts that long have slept !
Kindling former smiles again,
In faded eyes that long have wept !"

An hour passed on and Roland did not make his appearance, refreshments came in.

" Where is your master, Peter," asked Mrs. Manning.

"In his own room, ma'am, playing cards," answered he

Charlotte heard the dialogue.

"Oh," said the lady shrugging her shoulders, "tell him I want him directly."

The refreshments were nearly finished when they re-appeared. Roland's face looked flushed—the Major's if possible more bilious looking than ever—and at all times it looked extremely so. "Pardon my delay, dear Serina," said he, to his lady, "but," added he more lowly, "Percie, would not let me move, there I was chained to the table through politeness to him."

Charlotte very nervously watched Roland, she saw him drink several glasses of wine, and the first of the company that rose to move she very gladly followed.

"We shall often have the honor I hope of seeing you, Mrs. Percie," said the Major, handing her down stairs—"Mrs. Manning was charmed with your song."

"She is my own sweet wife," said Roland, taking her arm and squeezing it vehemently.

She trembled—she feared he must have drank too much.

"Oh, *bravo—bravissimo, ecco il marito di gufo*," exclaimed the soft tones of Mr. Allegri Lambert's voice.

"What does the puppy say, Chralotte?" asked Roland eagerly; "I'll make him eat his words."

"For my sake, my dearest Roland, come on, and take no notice," urged Charlotte terrified; "Don't mind—it is not of the slightest consequence—come—do come," and she tried to draw him on.

Major Manning had left them.

"*Guardatevi ben da lui*," said Miss Lambert, sneering.

"*Egli è un poco brillo*," said Mr. Corelli Lambert.

How felt Charlotte—her idolized Roland,

to be sneered at, but she urged him on, and they gained their rooms safely.

"Dear—good Charlotte," hiccupped Roland, "I'll give you something pretty to-morrow—I won to-night £50!"

"In so short a time," thought she: "Oh, if they teach him to gamble."

CHAPTER III.

AFTER breakfast, Roland, true to his promise, went out, and at the best shop then in Edinburgh, he bought his wife a beautiful cashmere shawl, for which he unhesitatingly paid £20, and he placed it gracefully on her shoulders; Charlotte was woman enough to feel glad of the possession of such a shawl—though she gently chided Roland for his unnecessary extravagance.

A week passed, and Ellen was sufficiently recovered to leave the hospital, Charlotte, with some money she had for dress, hired a small lodging for her at Leith, and sent her there to regain her strength.

One fine afternoon, Charlotte walked with Roland towards Arthur's seat, on the way they met two very fine looking young men, one, after looking very intently at Charlotte, took off his hat most respectfully, she bowed and blushed most deeply as she did so.

"Where did you know that young nobleman?" asked Roland, "he has certainly brought a bright bloom to your cheeks."

"My dear father introduced me to him at my only ball in Edinburgh—and he is a college friend of my beloved Henry's."

"And he reminds you of your elopement—aye," said Roland.

"Yes," said Charlotte, "he was very good-natured to me that night. Your farewell

words made my heart beat so—I believe I became rather faint, and he supplied me liberally with wine and water.”

“And many kind words I have no doubt,” said Roland with a sneer.

“He was too young for that,” replied Charlotte, “and if he had, I doubt much whether I should have noticed them, for my thoughts were all engrossed by you.”

“Your recollection of him is very accurate at any rate,” said Roland. Walking on for sometime in silence unbroken till they met Major Manning, who accosted them in a very friendly manner.

“Will you do a kind thing, Percie,” said he to Roland, “and come dine with me to-day at six; I expect a few young men, among them Lord Adrian Wilson, a cousin of Mrs. Manning’s—that is,” said he laughingly, “if Mrs. Percie will give you leave.” He feared her gentle influence over her husband, and he

determined to ridicule him out of it for his own purposes.

"Mrs. Percie is I assure you, delighted her husband should enjoy himself," said Charlotte sweetly.

"I'll join your party, Major," replied Roland, "with many thanks, and I'll give you your revenge if you please."

The Major smiled meaningly at Charlotte and cantered off.

"Will you forgive me, dearest Roland," said Charlotte, "if I offer one little piece of advice."

"Certainly," answered he, now in high humour—"you know listening does not compel me to follow it."

"I fear," said Charlotte, very gently, "Major Manning is a professed gambler." She told the story of the wine and water—adding, "take care then, and do not let him make you either drink deeply, or play deeply.—I am

afraid he seems determined to make you do both."

"Upon my word, considering your age and experience in the world, Mrs. Percie," said Roland sarcastically, "you speak with wonderful knowledge of life, and a prudence beyond your years—because a man is hospitable and allows you to amuse yourself at his house, playing cards—and moreover, allows you to win his money fairly and honestly—he is a professed gambler—really your sagacity does infinite credit to those who brought you up—who taught you such a distrust of society, you ought to become a public corrector of men and manners, and all the abuses that have crept into society at large—your parents may well be proud of you."

"Alas! they have no reason to be so," said Charlotte, in a low voice,—a tear trembling in her eye.

"Oh! I daresay you are heartily sorry you

left them to marry me," said Roland bitterly.

"Roland, you well know my love for you, did I not regret my undutiful conduct to my parents, you would I hope be the first to condemn me."

Their walk ended in silence, and Charlotte saw him depart for Major Manning's with a sorrowful heart; not one kind word did he say to her before he went, and she sat alone that long, long evening by her lonely fire side, her thoughts despite her, wandering to her home—her happy cheerful home—and the kind faces that beamed on her around its merry hearth, in days passed and gone; and she had left them *all* for one—tears, plentiful tears, relieved her. The dreary night came on, blowing and wet, and Charlotte could not sleep—four o'clock had chimed, and she dozed, she was awakened by seeing a light in her room—she looked out—she saw

Roland standing with his back to her—he was busy examining her drawers, and she saw him draw out the shawl he had bought her, which she, so valuing, had carefully folded up in two wrappers—he took it out—closed the drawer, and placed the shawl in his trunk. Charlotte feigned sleep.

Their morning meeting was cold on Roland's part—on Charlotte's, the same as ever; he spent the day out, and returned only to dress for dinner—telling Charlotte coldly he was engaged out—only one evening during the following month did he remain at home, and then he was busy writing letters. Charlotte tried to continue invariably sweet and kind in her manners towards him, and occasionally he would repay her efforts by a smile, or a word—but she thought he sometimes looked almost unhappy.

The day after the scene of the shawl she was sitting alone, when a messenger asked to see her;

he was sent from the shop where the shawl had been bought.

"It was returned this morning, madam," said the shop-man.—Charlotte nodded her head.—"And the money that was paid last week for it all refunded, as you did not like it. On looking over it we find one stain, which we must get some compensation for—you did not wear it, madam?"

"No, sir," replied Charlotte; "and I am surprised how it could get stained.—What is the amount you require?"

He named a sum.

"I'll pay you that directly," said Charlotte, and she sought her almost empty purse, gave him the money, begging there might be nothing more said about it.

On the following Sunday, at prayers, Charlotte recognised her shawl on a middle-aged lady—this same lady she afterwards saw step into a coronetted carriage, in which was Lord

Adrian Wilson. She envied her not its possession, but she sighed to think how her husband had deceived her.

CHAPTER IV.

IN a small, comfortably-furnished room, in Major Manning's house, sat Roland Percie, Major Manning, and a friend of the latter's, a Mr. Winstanley. On a table near them was a nicely-arranged supper, of which the two latter seemed to eat with great relish, but Roland, though he had some wild-fowl on his plate, had scarcely touched it.

"You have played in very bad luck, these last few nights, my dear fellow," said Major Man-

ning, addressing Roland; "but courage, 'never venture, never win,' you know; we can have a trial of luck, at a low rate, when we have refreshed ourselves—you don't eat or drink though. Come Winnie," added he, to his friend, "another piece of this very fine fowl."

"I don't intend to venture again," said Roland, "until I have paid my debts to you."

"Oh, nonsense," said the Major, gaily.—
"What signifies a few pounds between friends."

"But a few hundreds of pounds do," replied Roland; and after supper he returned home. He entered his sitting-room; on the table were two letters for him—he snatched them up—one he eagerly opened; it was from the banker in London, enclosing bills to the amount of £3500, as he had desired—his poor wife's fortune,—and £2000 of this alone, he owed Major Manning—in one short six weeks! the other letter was from from Barton, merely

congratulating them on their escape. Roland felt a shuddering—he would pay this debt—but then he would redeem it, for luck could not always favour Major Manning, and his wife, and their children, if they had them, should not suffer from his fault. What fatal reasoning—how often the same has urged one on. “We shall try once again, and regain our losses;”—the once becomes many times—the losses increase instead of diminishing—ruin comes before ere we awake from our infatuation.

Before noon next day Roland had discharged his debts.

“He is a better pigeon than I thought at first,” was Major Manning’s inward ejaculation, on receiving the money. “I’ll leave him for a while—I’ll try Lord Adrian now.”

Roland returned home, determined, however, not to leave him. Charlotte was working busily when he entered; she was deadly pale, he thought, and a pang smote him as he

looked at her: she was embroidering a waist-coat for him, and love urged on her needle fast.

"I am so glad you are come, Roland," said she, "for I want to show you a note, I just now received—an invitation to a grand subscription ball, to be given by the young gentlemen in Edinburgh, to the ladies—you will tell me what to say."

"You have only to say you accept the invitation, Charlotte," said Roland, seating himself near her; "of course I'll be a subscriber too, and you must get a very handsome dress for the occasion."

She thought of the shawl; she had never mentioned it to her husband. "Indeed, my dear Roland," said she, softly, "I do not need any addition to my wardrobe; I have three good ball dresses."

"But you'll get another to please me, Charlotte," and he opened his pocket book, and gave her a £20 note, in doing so, several

bank bills fell out, and Charlotte became a shade paler, as she took the money hesitatingly, and a tear, despite her, rolled down her cheek.

Roland observed her agitation, and he drew her gently towards him. "You are not well, I fear, dear Lotta," said he, kindly.

"I am, now, my dear husband," replied she, "but last night I was a little ill."

"Come," said he, "write the answer to this note, and then we will choose the dress."

How brightly beautiful Charlotte looked during that walk !

Without any invitation, that evening Roland entered Major Manning's house, and he found Lord Adrian Wilson, and a young friend of his, seated at the tea table, with Mrs. Manning ; her husband sat near the fire, speaking confidentially to his friend, Winstanley ; he started a little on seeing Roland, and winked at Winstanley, saying in a whisper, "our plan won't do to-night," and he

saluted Roland with great warmth, saying, "I was just meditating sending an embassy to you, to come and join our little *coterie*. In honour I must give you revenge."

After tea, Mrs. Manning produced a backgammon table, and Lord Adrian's friend sat down as her adversary. The gentlemen adjourned to the Major's room, and Lord Adrian went too, though uninvited.

"Do you wish to play with us?" asked the Major.

"I never play any game of hazard for money," replied he, gaily; and turning to Roland, he said, "once, three years ago now, at college, I played and lost double my year's pocket money; your brother-in-law, Henry, extricated me from my difficulties, for had the masters known of my gambling, I should have been expelled, and in gratitude for my deliverance, I made a vow never to play for money, and I have not broken it yet, nor shall I, I hope."

"A very childish proceeding, my dear,

Lord," said Major Manning; "cards are a very agreeable pastime, for a winter's evening—you had better lay aside your resolve, and join us.—We will play very moderately."

"Oh, no! Major Manning; I will look on—that will amuse me sufficiently."

Roland and the Major commenced. The latter named a stake so low, that Roland, quite despairing of retrieving his losses, exclaimed:

"Oh! Major; remember what I have lost. We never played so low before."

"It is in consideration of your losses, my dear Percie, that I am thus moderate, but I'll be guided by you."

Roland named a stake which made Lord Adrian start—so high did it seem to him.

Major Manning had caught a glimpse of the contents of the pocket book, and he played accordingly; he knew Roland now sufficiently, and he allowed him to rise that night, from the table, a winner of some pounds.

It appeared almost incredible to Lord Adrian, how two gentlemen, for their own amusement, could play so high.

In saying good night, the Major whispered to Roland, "I'll be ready for you, every night you please."

During the week before the ball, Roland had added £500 more to his losses.

The ball night arrived, and Charlotte dressed herself with great care to please her husband.—Her dress, his choice, a rich black velvet, became her extremely; she wore the pearls, her dear parents' gifts on her first ball night.

During her toilette, Roland came into the sitting room, and feeling tired, for he had had several nights of fatigue, he stretched himself on the sofa, and was soon fast asleep.

Charlotte entered, not knowing he was there, but seeing him, she put out the candle

she had in her hand, and by the fire light looked at the letters that had just come; there was an official document for Roland; she looked at it eagerly,—perhaps it was his promotion which he had expected so long; if it were, the gazette, in the London paper would tell: she opened the paper, and there she found her loved husband promoted to be a Captain; she lighted her candle, she could not wait to have him awake, to tell the news, and she gently bent down and kissed his forehead, he started, and half sleepily exclaimed:

“Oh! I thought I had won back all my losses;” he stared at Charlotte, his expression had palsied her words of joy and congratulation. “You are dressed Charlotte, I see,” said he, sitting up.

“And you are a Captain, dearest Roland; see, here is the gazette,” exclaimed she.

He kissed her joyfully; he thought of telling of his losses, but he hesitated: he would

win them back, he was resolved. He went to dress himself for the ball.

Charlotte sat pondering on his awakening thoughts; the bank notes she remembered.—What should she do.—To advise him was only folly: so she determined to try to appear unconscious of his losses.

Roland came back in high spirits.

Charlotte wrote next day an account of his promotion—she wrote so well.

Have you ever, gentle reader, been to a subscription ball?—it far surpasses an ordinary public ball: there are so many gentlemen bent on devoting themselves to every one's amusement. Be you old, or ugly—young, or handsome—you are quite sure of getting partners for dancing, if you cannot hope to gain a partner for life. The stewards are victims decked out for sacrifice. How amiable and attentive they are—how they completely forget self for that *one* night. And then, such sup-

plies of refreshment as there are, and so well recommended—every one looks so smiling and so pleased, and so many go round saying—“What a pleasant ball!”—“What a gay ball!”—“What a delightful ball!”—“It reflects such credit on our entertainers!”—“How very well this ball is attended!” and such like observations, that, were any disposed to find fault, it would be plainly against the evidences of their senses.

Charlotte thought it was really a brilliant scene; but it was in the same room, a little more than seven months before, she had been at a ball, with her father's kind voice encouraging her to enjoyment,—and she felt a sigh rising now and then, as she thought of her desertion of him. The first dance she danced with one of the stewards, and after it she was seated near the door-way when her acquaintances, the Lamberts, entered, looking pensive, and as if their thoughts were far away from the scene. They all accosted Charlotte.

"What a band—so execrably out of tune," said Mr. Corelli Lambert.

"I wish you had heard the bands in Italy, Mrs. Percie."

Charlotte received them rather coldly, she had no intention of forgetting their rudeness at Mrs. Manning's, since which she had only met them *en passant* in the street.

"Of course we shall have no vocal music to-night," said Mr. Allegri Lambert, mournfully.

"We hope to have some excellent songs, to enliven our supper table," said Charlotte's partner, pointedly.

The Lamberts moved on.

"The wits here," added he to Charlotte, "call those two ladies A sharp—and B flat, one of their names is Anna—something—the other Berengaria."

"Annalda it is," said Charlotte, smiling.

"They make complete fools of themselves," said he, "they left this city about five years ago

with a maiden aunt, and are now returned from the Continent, 'or beautiful Italy,' with changed names, and changed manners; they are all alike—the young men are called the musical stick, and the musical box."

"Mr. Corelli is the stick, I suppose," said Charlotte, laughing, "and Mr. Allegri the box, one is so tall and thin, the other so fat and short."

"Exactly, Mrs. Percie," said her partner.

Roland came now and sat near his wife, all round the room he heard her praises, and he felt proud of her.

Charlotte was talking gaily to him, when looking up she saw Lord Adrian Wilson entering the room—she stopped—she blushed—her elopement was before her. Leaning on him were two ladies—one was elderly—Charlotte recognised the lady of the shawl—and the other was a young creature just blooming into womanhood, with a sweet, open countenance—large, dark blue eyes, and fair hair,

falling in clustering ringlets about her very pretty face. Charlotte returned his bow, but her eyes were fixed on the young lady with him, who was very much like some one she knew—particularly her smile.

“Some of your own family, perhaps,” said Roland.

“I cannot remember,” replied Charlotte, “but it is a striking likeness.”

Lord Adrian having procured seats for his companions, and shaken hands with a dozen acquaintances, advanced to the Percies; he extended his hand to Charlotte—she took it, and he did the same to Roland.

“Am I too young, Mrs. Percie,” said he, “to claim the honour of your hand, for a dance?”

The thought of their last dance glanced across her mind as she smilingly replied, “certainly not;” and he took a seat near them.

The dance was forming, and she rose with Lord Adrian.

"Won't you dance, Roland?" asked she.

"I'll introduce you with pleasure to a nice partner," said Lord Adrian, "if Mrs. Percie will excuse me," and he led Roland up to the fair young girl who had accompanied him to the ball, and introduced her as Lady Mary Wilson, his sister.

"It was her first ball," he told Charlotte.

"I have been trying to make out a likeness for your sister," said Charlotte, in the pauses of the dance, "and her name, Mary, has reminded me of it."

"And who is it?" asked Lord Adrian, eagerly.

"It is my sister Mary," replied Charlotte, "she is excessively like her. Your sister, however, has the advantage in personal appearance."

"She is a sweet amiable creature too," said Lord Adrian, very *naïvely*; "is your sister older than you, Mrs. Percie?"

"Oh, no!" answered Charlotte, "she is

many years my junior ; indeed, she is a mere child, only nine years old."

"And like my Mary," said the boy, "how pretty she must be. Will you let me introduce her to you, Mrs. Percie?" asked he.

"Most willingly," said Charlotte.

When Lady Mary spoke, she thought her more than ever like her little sister.

The whole evening passed delightfully to Charlotte, her husband was very attentive to her, and that constituted the chief charm of the ball.

CHAPTER V.

"I WILL make a final effort to get back my losses," thought Roland, as he ascended the stairs at Major Manning's, some nights after the ball. There were many ladies there that night, and among them, Lady Mary Wilson and her aunt, and chaperone Mrs. Neville, and of course, Lord Adrian was with his sister. Charlotte had been invited but she was glad of

the excuse, a cold gave her to send an apology.

The Lamberts were present and the Major took advantage of a loud Bravura of theirs to make his exit to his own room, and Roland soon followed him.

The room was so snug, it was Major Manning's favorite retreat, "there he passed his mornings reading," he said, and he stirred the fire complacently into a brighter blaze, and smiled on his friend, Mr. Winstanley, who just then entered.

"Put down some more coals, Winnie," said he, "you understand so well how to make a fire. My long residence abroad has unsuited me for a fire-maker;" and he then launched into a very exaggerated statement of his life in India, declaring it was there alone a man felt the pleasure of living.

Roland thought of this conversation years afterwards.

"Luck will be against me to-night, I pre-

dict," said the Major, shuffling the cards—and for a time it seemed so.

Roland had won back £500—and felt quite elated by his luck.

The Major wanted him to stop.

"With his luck it would be rash folly," he thought—so on he played, and he soon found that luck is variable, for in a very short time he lost back £200.

"Now," said the Major, "I will give you a fair chance for your money—you have £300 winners by to-night—this will be our last game, for I hear the refreshment trays going up—so let it be double or quits—you stake your winnings, and I'll stake the same sum."

"Done," said Roland, and the game began.

Mrs. Manning had sent Lord Adrian to call her husband, and as he opened the door he heard the proposal;—he watched the

game with intense interest—he saw Roland pale and red by turns—he saw the Major's cool self-possession,—the game proceeded—the chances were even—Roland's hand trembled as he took up his cards—his cheek was flushed—he turned pale—the Major won the game !

Roland handed him the money, he did not join the party in the drawing-room, and he walked slowly home ; that night he registered a solemn promise never to enter Major Manning's house again—his resolve was then to live frugally within his income, to save and refund Charlotte's fortune—£1300 alone now remained in the banker's hand—well, that should be sacred—and he dropped asleep dreaming of legacies and bags of gold. His first waking thought was of Major Manning—“ he must have played unfairly,” thought he, Charlotte was right—I am his dupe—he knew he would win when he staked so high—He thinks I'll go again, to try and recover my

losses—but he will find himself mistaken. “I intend to take a long ride to-day, Charlotte,” said he to her, “after breakfast, but I will be back at dinner hour, for I shall dine with you.”

Charlotte watched him mounting his horse from the window, and he seeing her, looked up with his beautiful smile, and kissed hands to her—she gave very particular directions to the cook, to have a good dinner ready for her husband, and the morning passed quickly on—she was practising the harp when the door opened, and Lord Adrian Wilson was announced, he had visited there the day after the ball with his sister; and Charlotte was surprised to see him so soon again—she received him very politely, but he seemed a little embarrassed.

“I am very anxious to see Mr. Percie,” said Lord Adrian, “indeed I have some particular business with him.”

“He is gone to take a long ride,” said

Charlotte, "but he will return to dine here—and if you be not better engaged we shall both be delighted if you will join us, and enliven our evening."

It was her first invitation to any one since her marriage.—She was by nature very hospitable—and from her earliest childhood she had seen hospitality unboundedly practised.

"Indeed, I shall be very happy to do so, Mrs. Percie," replied he, "and I can then speak to Mr. Percie"—he paused.

"I ought to apologise," said Charlotte, "for delaying so many days returning your sister's and Mrs. Neville's kind and friendly visit, but I have been confined to the house, with a cold since the ball.—Roland wished me to avoid taking any additional cold, so I am a prisoner."

"You must not treat either Mary or aunt Neville with ceremony," answered Lord

Adrian, "they are both your friends, I assure you, at least they wish to be so."

"I feel delighted at their kindness," said Charlotte, and should be happy to be able to count them among my friends."

"I promise you, Mrs. Percie, that when you know them you will like them both extremely—my aunt Neville, my mother's only sister—has been to us all, since my poor mother's death, a second mother—she is a widow, and lives near Leith, in a beautiful cottage, and during our vacations she leaves her home, and comes to my father's place in the Highlands, Mary never leaves her.—Oh! Mary is a sweet young creature, Mrs. Percie, so gentle, and yet so gay—I will tell you a match I have made for her—now don't laugh—I am accounted a great match-maker at home."

"You may trust to my discretion, Lord Adrian," said Charlotte, playfully, "remember I am a discreet, sedate matron."

"Well, I will tell you—it is your brother Henry—Mary is only three months his senior—that does not signify, and they are so well matched in disposition,—they are both so very clever too."

"Though such a match is not probable, your wishing it must flatter dear Henry greatly," said Charlotte.

"But, dear Mrs. Percie, you must not tell him" urged Lord Adrian—"it would spoil all."

"You may depend on my keeping your secret very religiously," said she, laughing—"though our sex, you know are accused of not being able to keep one. My silence shall prove to you the falseness of this aspersion on our fair names."

"You sex are good and kind," exclaimed Lord Adrian—"will you tell me, Mrs. Percie, is your sister like you—or like Henry?"

"She is more like my brother Manuel than either," answered Charlotte, smiling; "I am

afraid you cannot make a match for her, Lord Adrian, she is unfortunately too juvenile."

"She is nine, and I am fifteen," said he, and he blushed deeply.

Charlotte saw his embarrassment, and would not laugh at him; she really liked the nobly disposed boy, he was so warm hearted and so natural.

"I am to make a tour through Ireland, in the spring, before I go on the continent," said Lord Adrian; "my father is anxious I should know my own countries before I travel. You will, perhaps, give me a letter of introduction to your family: I shall like so much to know them all;" he saw Charlotte hesitate—he guessed the reason, and he added gaily, "I believe a letter of introduction will be quite unnecessary, as I know Manuel and your father too, and I was introduced to your mother; so a letter of recommendation to your little sisters is all I will ask."

"Henry returns home for some months' va-

cation, in spring," said Charlotte, "and I fancy you will not think a letter of any kind necessary to the house he inhabits, he will ensure you a welcome from all its inmates."

"As we meet again so soon, I will now take my departure," said Lord Adrian, rising, and gracefully wishing Charlotte good morning.

Charlotte had changed her dress, when Roland returned; it was then only a short time before dinner, and she, never fancying he would find fault with her asking a guest to dine, told at once of Lord Adrian's visit, of his wish to see him, and of her invitation and his pleased acceptance of it.

"You asked *him* to dine without my leave!" exclaimed Roland, hastily; "without consulting me! it is really too bad of you so soon take upon you this unlimited controul."

"Indeed, my dear Roland," replied Charlotte, gently, "It did not occur to me that you would disapprove of my doing so."

"I dare say Mrs. Percie," said he angrily, "you did not allow yourself to think nor care for my wishes on the subject."

"Believe me, Roland," replied she, "I would not do any thing contrary to your wishes, for worlds, and in future I shall be very particular about giving any invitations without your sanction."

"I'll take care you shall, madam," answered he, "and I'll now teach you a lesson you will not forget speedily; I will leave you full power to entertain *your* guest: you shall do the honours undisturbed, for I *will* dine out."

"Oh, Roland, dear Roland!" urged Charlotte, "do not treat me so! What will the young man think? I told him you were to dine here; the hope of this pleasure has made the day pass agreeably.—What excuse can I make him. Indeed, indeed, I never will ask any one again—do stay," and she laid her hand on his arm.

Roland threw it from him, and saying, "I wish you a pleasant evening, Mrs. Percie;" he quickly descended the stairs, slapped the hall door violently.

Charlotte could not restrain a few tears.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR more than half an hour Charlotte sat the picture of not knowing what to do. She thought of her home, where many a time, even as a child, she had invited guests to dinner, and where a kind smile repaid her efforts at hospitality. Once she remembered, when a gay girl of scarcely thirteen, she had brought home to dine a young lad and his sister, whose father had treated her father very rudely, at some public meeting; she had met them

riding tried ponies, and they said they were hungry, and Charlotte brought them to her father's house, where they were treated with every kindness, and her father, instead of chiding her, called her his "darling dove extending the olive branch around her." Next day a written apology came from those children's father, and all was peace between the parents. And now she had left that father for *one*, and how was her first trial of a housekeeper repaid by him!—she would not condemn him—no! "It is foolish of me to sit thus," thought she; "I must exert myself. Shall I say Roland was *obliged* to dine out?—no; that would not be true. I'll say plainly he dines out;" and with this resolve she awaited Lord Adrian's arrival. She heard a knock at the hall door. Oh, if it were an apology, how delighted she would be; it was not, she heard steps advancing—she must appear gay, else he might think she was not happy, and her salute was cheerful to

him when he entered. She rang for dinner.

"I'll not apologise, Lord Adrian," said she, gaily, "for our limited room, as you know officers must be satisfied with what is allotted them; but I must apologise for bringing you to a tête-à-tête dinner with me, for my husband dines out."—She saw he looked disappointed.

"I am sorry not to meet Mr. Percie, certainly," said Lord Adrian; "I must make you my agent in my business to him; for I am obliged to leave Edinburgh early to-morrow, for the Highlands, and he can reply to me by letter, I shall give you my address. You need not at all apologise though, for his absence, you must remember I am only a boy, and not accustomed to be treated with any ceremony—indeed I hate it."

"Well then, take your place there, and be a good boy," said Charlotte, pointing to the

foot of the table; and through the whole of dinner she so well sustained her part, that he could not imagine she had any cause of annoyance.

Her first effort at doing the honors of her table did her honor, and more than once her young companion inwardly compared her to his "dear sister Mary."

Dinner ended, Charlotte left the room for some time, and had her guest seen her during her absence, he would have been surprised that his late gay entertainer could weep as she did. She returned all smiles—poor thing!

"You are fond of music, of course, Lord Adrian," said Charlotte, "it is a national trait of your countrymen as well as of my own," and she touched her harp, which she had carefully tuned that day for her husband's ear.

"I am extremely fond of music, Mrs. Percie," replied he.

"Well then, I'll enliven our *tête-à-tête* with

some of your melodies," said Charlotte, and she sat to the harp and played a succession of lively Scotch airs—she would not trust herself to play a plaintive one in the then state of her feelings.

"Play some of your own beautiful melodies, Mrs. Percie," asked Lord Adrian.

"Many of them resemble yours," replied Charlotte, "though in others the difference is plainly observable between the music of both countries. Indeed your countrymen have laid claim to some of the most beautiful Irish airs, which I never will consent to accede them.—This is a sweet air," added she, playing the old Irish air, "Cruachan na Fèine."

"It is indeed," replied Lord Adrian; "but my favourite, among all your melodies, is the 'Meeting of the Waters.' I don't know the Irish name of the air."

"It is called the 'Old Head of Denis,'" said Charlotte, as she played it.

"If you would sing, Mrs. Percie," urged

Lord Adrian, "the words are so beautiful."

She complied ; but when she came to the first line of the third verse—

" 'Twas that friends, the belov'd of my bosom were near,"

the tears gushed from her eyes—her visit, in her happy girlhood, to the "sweet vale of Avoca," with her dear parents, was before her, in contrast to her present situation—and she ceased her strain.

"I cannot sing more, Lord Adrian," said she, rising, "that song brings home before me too forcibly."

She rang for tea, and soon recovered herself. Lord Adrian seemed fidgetty and ill at ease. When the tea things were removed he drew his chair near Charlotte's, and he said, in a voice of agitation—

"Will you allow me now, Mrs. Percie, be-

fore I say good night, to speak to you on my business with your husband?"

"Certainly," answered she, gaily, thinking his business should be about either a horse or a dog.

"You know Major Manning," said he, "but you do not perhaps think as I do, that he is a professed gambler"—he paused.

She thought it was something about a bet of his or a race.

"I remember, my dear mother," continued Lord Adrian, "as if she died but yesterday, and she has been dead seven years—and she always told my father everything that happened at home, and he was equally confidential with her."

Charlotte wondered what this had to do with either dogs, horses, or races—she said nothing—but seemed all attention.

"I suppose," added Lord Adrian, speaking more earnestly—"that you and Mr. Percie are the same."

She smiled.

This re-assured him, and he said, "Major Manning, as you of course know, induced Mr. Percie to play, and to play very high too."

Charlotte turned deadly pale, and her companion's brow flushed the brightest scarlet.

"I assure you, dear Mrs. Percie, I am most sincerely your friend ; I'd be ungrateful to Henry, if I were not, and I am Mr. Percie's too, if he will allow me. It may be forward of me to meddle in his affairs, as I am young, but," continued he, very hurriedly, "I have some thousands this moment, at my own disposal, they were left me by an old aunt, and they are subject to no controul but my own, and if your husband would take them from me—if he would condescend to borrow them I mean, it would make me very *very* happy : I have no present use for them. He may have a little embarrassment for money just now, and it would be conferring such a favour

on me, to allow me to be of service to either of you.—You will say this for me, Mrs. Percie, he can write to me, my address is Glenvaron N——, Perthshire, and now good night,” and he took Charlotte’s cold hand in his; he did not wait to hear her murmured thanks, but was gone.

Charlotte sat there—“Roland losing thousands—incredible!” she was seated still there when midnight chimed.

Roland returned home.

In justice to Lord Adrian—the noble boy—she would summon up courage, though her heart beat wildly.

“Why are you up so late?” asked Roland, hastily.

Charlotte told all.

“A confounded meddling puppy—he shall regret this,” said Roland, passionately.

“Dear Roland he could have no motive but a good one,” urged Charlotte, very gently, “if he erred in interfering with your affairs,

he meant kindly ; remember, he is but a boy."

"I'm very sorry," exclaimed Roland, in a rage, "you did not wait to marry him : you would have just suited each other—a pair of censors general, to all mankind. Leave me, now, and *never* again presume to pry into my affairs."

Charlotte left the room, for she felt her blood turning to icy coldness ; she could not weep ; she hurried to bed—poor thing ! and next morning how carefully she prepared breakfast for that unkind husband. Oh, the enduring love of a sweet tempered woman !

The following morning—it was now near the end of March—a message came to Roland, who had eaten his breakfast in silence to say the General wanted him in a hurry.

Charlotte trembled as she saw him leave the room ; her untasted breakfast was soon

removed, and she sat there trying to read.

In about an hour, Roland returned; he seemed pleased, and advancing towards her, took her hand, and said, "Charlotte, our regiment will leave Edinburgh the day after tomorrow, for Carlisle, so have every thing packed up. Are you not glad?"

A bright smile assured him of her pleasure.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT night Roland dined with Charlotte, and seemed in high spirits; she longed to ask him to write to Lord Adrian, but feared to renew his anger. "I shall have some farewell visits to pay, Roland," said Charlotte, "before we leave."

"There is one you must not pay, my dear Charlotte," replied Roland; "at least I beg you will not—it is to Mrs. Manning."

"Of course, I shall not, Roland, if you wish it," said she, gently.

"I have every reason to think that Major Manning has used me unfairly," observed Roland, hurriedly; "it cannot now be helped, —it will teach me, however, a lesson for the future," he paused, "and on considering the subject," added he, "I begin to think Lord Adrian meant kindly towards me,—he seems a fine spirited boy.—I will write him my thanks, though I will not accept his aid."

"How much I am obliged to you, for that, my dearest Roland," said Charlotte.

Another wife would have remonstrated with her husband, before his temper had cooled, and would have afterwards irritated him, by repeated urgings, to do what she thought right, or she would have borne ill-temperedly his refusal. Charlotte did otherwise, and she gained her point.

"You have a visit to return to Lady Mary Wilson and Mrs. Neville," said Roland, "and

if your cold be well enough to-morrow, I will go there with you." It was a pity Roland's temper was not *always* good,—how happy it would have made his wife. Next day was fine, and Roland hired a covered vehicle, and went with Charlotte to pay this visit.

Mrs. Neville's cottage was half a mile below Leith; it was a beautiful little dwelling; before it a very green and well kept lawn, sloped down to the Frith of Forth, which, with vessels constantly passing and re-passing, presented an animated scene. Mrs. Neville received them in a very friendly manner, in a large sitting room, with windows opening on the lawn; around these windows grew a variety of creepers, one was half open, and a large *magnolia conspicua* with its fragrant bloom, grew near it, a vase filled with monthly roses and some mignonette, was on one work table, while on another was a bowl of the choicest exotics, mingled with garden flowers; there were va-

rious coloured agaleas, spring cyclamens, and beautiful camellias, with heliotropes and heaths, the early tulips, wallflowers, hyacinths, narcissus, and bunches of violets.

"These are Mary's arranging, I assure you," said Mrs. Neville with a smile, pointing to the flowers, "she is passionately fond of flowers, and devotes a great deal of her time to rearing and attending the plants in our little garden and green house. That mignonette you see there, Mrs. Percie, she is very proud of; she planted it early last spring—it flowered early—she cut it down in the beginning of September, and it sprung up again last month, and blossomed freely: you are fond of flowers, are you not?"

"Very much so indeed," replied Charlotte.

"You shall have a large bouquet, then Mrs. Percie," said Mrs. Neville.

"Thank you," answered Charlotte, "but

it would be a pity to take them from you, now, we should have to leave them in Edinburgh."

"Our regiment," added Roland "is ordered to Carlisle, and we leave our present quarters on Thursday."

Mrs. Neville expressed her regret at hearing this, she said, "Mary and she had planned many excursions with them during the spring."

Mary just then entered with some flowers in her hand;—she had been out in her garden, and she looked so fresh and blooming—she joined her aunt in regretting the Percies departure. "Have you seen all the lions, Captain Percie?" asked she,

"I believe I have, Lady Mary," answered he.

"And has Mrs. Percie too?" enquired Mrs. Neville.

"All but one," replied Roland, "we were

speaking of that one during our drive here—it is Craigmillar Castle—we have driven past it, but never inspected it. Is it really worth a visit?"

"I think it is certainly," said Lady Mary, gaily, "the scene of so much historic interest—to me—a Scotch girl, at least, is worth visiting."

"It is but two miles, I think from Edinburgh, Mary," said Mrs. Neville, "and if you and Captain Percie," added she, turning to Charlotte, "would allow us to call for you tomorrow, about noon, we would drive you there, and bring you here to dine with us; without ceremony you see, I ask you?"

"You are most kind, Mrs. Neville," answered Charlotte, and she looked at Roland.

"We accept your invitation," said he, "and feel greatly obliged by it."

The door then opened, and the Lamberts were introduced.

"We came so pleasantly along," said Mr. Allegri Lambert, seating himself near Lady Mary, "we were singing together all the way, some beautiful Italian airs," and he glanced at the open piano forte, evidently wishing some one would ask for a renewal of their concert.

"Were you ever in Italy," asked Miss Annalda Lambert, of Roland, whom she sat next to.

"Never," replied he, "nor do I ever expect for that happiness."

"Happiness indeed, you may well call it," exclaimed she, raising her eyes—what happy years we passed there."

The conversation was going on around and she continued '*sotte voce*' to Roland.

"The sight that charmed me most in all my travels," said she, "was Plutarch's tomb—I felt as if I could weep there, I so love poetry."

"Plutarch's tomb," asked Roland, "I really never heard of it—where is it situated?"

"O *veramente*," answered she, "do not you really know it is in the village of Arquà, we passed a day there—and did you never hear of Laura—to whom he wrote so many sonnets?"

"I have certainly heard of Laura," said Roland, smiling, "and of her lover too, and his sonnets, and moreover of his burying-place at Arquà."

"And to tell me you did not," exclaimed Miss Annalda, reprovingly; "Oh, *Lidte molto cattivo*."

"I merely told you I never heard of Plutarch's burying place," said Roland, laughing.

"Oh, you false man," sighed Miss Annalda, quite unconscious of her mistake.

"And did you ever read any of Dante's Poems," asked Miss Lambert, who having

overheard some of the conversation was resolved to join in it, and show her learning.

"Of course," replied Roland, scarce able to contain a laugh—he saw they were really pedantic, without real knowledge, so he determined to quiz them a little.

"Are not his '*Pastor Fido*,' and his '*Jerusalem Delivered*,'" asked he, with a grave face, "very beautiful?"

"More than beautiful," exclaimed Miss Lambert.

"Divinely inspired," said Miss Annalda.

"And then Domenichino and Lutti's Poems, don't you admire them," continued he.

They would not avow ignorance.

"Oh, very much," said Miss Lambert.

"Most particularly," said Miss Annalda.

"I must certainly try if Mrs. Percie is as conversant with Italian literature as you are," exclaimed Miss Lambert, and she glided over in her graceful continental manner as she

thought, and accosted Charlotte with, "Oh, Mrs. Percie, your husband is so clever—so very well informed."

Charlotte longed to say, "how do *you* know?"

"And," continued Miss Lambert, "he has just now been talking of Italian poets and poetry.—Which is your favorite poet?"

"I consider myself not competent to judge of Italian poetry," said Charlotte.

"Do you admire the poems of Domeniehi-no and Lutti?" asked she.

"Their poems," said Charlotte.

"It is their *works* you admire, Charlotte," exclaimed Roland, who had listened to this conversation greatly amused; and it made Charlotte and he laugh that day on their return to the barracks.

In driving through town they saw Major and Mrs. Manning entering a shop.

"I should like very much, dear Roland,"

said Charlotte, "to leave my card now for Mrs. Manning, if you have no objection."

"Do if you like, Lotta," replied he, gaily, he was then very gay and good humoured, which gaiety and good humour continued during the whole evening.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEXT day was favourable to their excursion, and very punctually Mrs. Neville and Lady Mary Wilson arrived at the barracks, and Charlotte and Roland drove off with them.

“Edinburgh is, of course, very familiar to you and Captain Percie,” said Mrs. Neville, addressing Charlotte; “and you must acknowledge it is a beautiful city : Those stately rows of

new houses contrast well, I think, with the very antique edifices around; I prefer it to any city I have seen."

"Aunt Neville has walked the corso at Milan, and drove along the Lung Arno, at Florence, and sighed among the ruins of Rome, like our friends the Lamberts," said Lady Mary playfully.

"But Scotland is your native land, is it not, Mrs. Neville?" asked Charlotte.

"It is—and Edinburgh my birth-place," replied she; "but like you, I once had a tie to attach me to England. I lived many years in Cumberland."

"But you love bonnie Scotland, better than all, dear auntie," said Lady Mary, fondly taking her hand.

"The very situation of this city, amid so many hills and rocks, and the estuary there below it, is very beautiful," said Mrs. Neville; "and then it is filled with so many associa-

tions,—Holyrood Palace—its ancient castle rising in the midst of present grandeur, recalling the past so forcibly, and the streets of our city have such a quiet, peaceable look, according so well with its ancient recollections.”

The drive to Craigmillar castle, passed very pleasantly.

Roland was most agreeable and gay, and Charlotte, in his smiles, enjoyed herself.

“We shall take a walk over these ruins, shall we not?” asked Lady Mary, when they arrived at the castle, and she led the way.

“It must have been a fine building, so fine it is now in its decay,” said Mrs. Neville: “you know that James V, lived here, during his minority, and the beautiful and hapless Mary Stuart, his daughter, resided here.”

“I feel a peculiar pleasure,” observed Lady Mary, “in visiting any scenes that she has rendered famous: I am her devoted admirer.”

Every just thinking person must both admire and pity her," said Mrs. Neville, "she has her enemies though, but I really believe her perfectly innocent. Her manners, lively and clever, as they are represented to have been, were too much so for that fanatical time. I have heard many learned men speak of her character: I remember the opinion of one, Dr. O——, he was a friend of Mr. Neville's, and a profound historian, he said, he believed the documents produced against her, were either forged or grossly interpolated, and that had she really been guilty, her enemies would have had ample means of proving her guilt without resorting to any underhand manoeuvres."

"It is so much more agreeable," said Charlotte, "to believe her undeserving her unhappy fate. There seems a pleasure in sympathising in unmerited sufferings, and Mary's beauty, talent, and misfortunes, arouse our

sympathy because we think she was innocent.

"Most true," answered Mrs. Neville. "To compare another historical event with Mary's sufferings, though indeed the persons cannot bear comparison, how little sympathy we feel for Richard's death on Bosworth field."

"It is now only one o'clock," said Lady Mary, "and we can drive to Dalkeith Palace, and be back to Leith in good time—will you Mrs. Percie?"

"Oh, very willingly," replied she; "I never was within the gates of Dalkeith."

"And farther on a little we can see Newbattle Abbey, the beautiful seat of the Marquis of Lothian, it is built on the ruins of the old Abbey," said Lady Mary, "you see I am determined you shall take a pleasing recollection away of our

'Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood.'

"We cannot say 'shaggy wood,'" said Roland, "in looking on this beautiful scene."

It was six o'clock when they entered the drawing-room of Mrs. Neville's cottage, at Leith. Lady Mary presented Charlotte with a small bouquet of exotics she had culled in the morning for her; the only addition to the party was a young Mr. Neville, a nephew of Mrs. Neville's. The dinner passed off very gaily, and Charlotte found each hour increase her liking for her new friends.

"I am afraid Captain Percie will find his *tête-à-tête* with my nephew, Godfrey, rather dull," said Mrs. Neville, as the ladies seated themselves after dinner, round the fire.

"Though very good," continued she, "he is very inanimate and so silent; it is a labour not always of love, to get him into conversation."

"The contrast between him and Adrian is very amusing, sometimes," observed Lady

Mary ; "they were at college together, and your brother, Mrs. Percie, christened them the first and second person singular—Adrian, the first person, that speaks ; and Mr. Neville, the second person, that is spoken to."

"Dear Henry," said Charlotte, "he is a merry hearted boy."

The conversation was carried on very gaily, for some time, when the gentleman joined them.

"You will give us some music will you not, Mrs. Percie?" asked Mrs. Neville.

"With pleasure," replied Charlotte,

"Come, Godfrey," said his aunt, "hand Mrs. Percie to the piano," and he stepped forward.

"Are you fond of music?" enquired Charlotte?

"Yes, ma'am," answered Mr. Neville,

"Do you play on any instrument," questioned she, determined to try and make him speak,

"No, ma'am," replied he.

"And do you sing?"

"Yes, ma'am;" and farther Charlotte did not try.

She chose a beautiful old Scotch song;—and sang it with sweet pathos. Roland felt obliged to her, and he joined her at the piano.

"Would not you sing, Captain Percie?" asked Lady Mary.

To oblige you I would do much, Lady Mary," said he, and added, to Charlotte—"sing with me our duet; you know the one Barton and I sang, the first evening we met," she complied, but her voice had a slight tremor in it during this song, for she remembered that night!

"The song that was near costing me my life, Lotta, you must sing now," said Roland to her; and she sang the little Spanish air.

When she had finished, Roland gaily told

them the story of both these songs.—“That last one got me a wife,” said he, laughingly.

“You ought to get it printed in letters of gold, then,” said Mrs. Neville, and turning to her nephew, she exclaimed, “I am afraid, Godfrey, you will never meet so much romance during your life as Captain Percie has. Would any song you ever heard allure you to take a wife—come confess now?”

“A song would not,” replied he.

And his aunt quizzed him gaily.

At a rather late hour the Percies took a very friendly leave of Mrs. Neville and her niece, and tears came into the latter’s eyes as she bid Charlotte adieu.

“I shall feel very lonely without you,—dear Mrs. Percie,” said she, “I almost regret having known you since we must part so soon.”

“We must hope for another merry meeting,”

said Mrs. Neville, "we shall take you perhaps by surprise some day."

"Oh! how delighted we shall be to see you both, Mrs. Neville," said Charlotte.

Roland gracefully seconded her expression.

On their return to Edinburgh, Roland was silent for sometime.

"You are not tired I hope, dear Roland," said Charlotte.

He took her hand—no love I am not tired," replied he, "but I have been thinking that I have treated you badly, in not confiding in you," and he told all his gambling transgressions with Major Manning.

"We have ample means of support now, dearest Roland," said she, sweetly; "let not this loss fret you."

"I do believe there is not another woman like you in this world, dearest Charlotte," said Roland, fondly embracing her—and that kind

word more than repaid Charlotte, for all his previous unkindness.

"If his temper were but steady," thought she, "how very, very happy I should be."

CHAPTER IX.

ON a cold, windy April forenoon, Manuel O'Carroll mounted his horse, at Coemcarne Park, and rode towards the town of W—; outside the principal entrance to his home, was a small hamlet, the inhabitants of which were all tenants of Mr. O'Carroll's; he was cantering through this, when he suddenly checked his horse, for before him, across the street—if street it might be called—where

erected several arches of evergreens, and a crowd were busy in preparing a bonfire—a large, substantial bonfire it was of turf and wood—the young heir turned quickly round, and, leaving the village, crossed some fields, and soon found himself at the entrance to an humble looking cottage; a rugged lane led to it, and Manuel, dismounting, took his horse's bridle on his arm, and slowly pursued his way: he knocked with his whip handle at the cottage door, for knocker there was none, and a country girl opened the door. "Is Father Owen at home, Kattie?" asked Manuel.

"He is at home, sir," replied Kattie, smiling and curtseying, "but he is just gone out."

"Then he is not within," said Manuel, "Where is he gone to?"

"Indeed, sir, I do not rightly know, but I think to the village, to see all the preparations. Won't you walk in, sir, there's a fire

in the parlour, and Jemmy will run down and call Father Owen."

Manuel followed her through a kitchen into a small parlour. "Desire Jemmy to say I am in no hurry, Kattie," said Manuel, as he seated himself in the only window, "I will wait here for him."

The room was small, yet scrupulously neat, one would have thought singularly so, from the entrance to it; the floor was sanded, and the walls purely white; on one side of the fire-place was a row of shelves, well filled with books, ecclesiastical books they were, with one or two exceptions, and at the other was a press containing useful but not very ornamental cups and saucers, plates and jugs; a round table was in the centre, and six chairs were carefully placed, at intervals, round the walls; the only ornaments of the simple room, was one, a picture, a beautiful original, of an Italian master, representing the visit of the wise men, to the stable, at Bethlehem, and

the other a small French clock, both the gifts of the priest's earliest friend, the Arch-bishop of Bordeaux, M. De——; inside this little chamber was another of equal size, and equal simplicity, the bed room, the windows of both rooms looked into a cabbage garden, overrun with weeds, and Manuel was just thinking how much better a nice flower garden would look there, when the door opened, and Father MacCarthy entered, or Father Owen as he was universally called; he was an old man, with long, grey hair, and a rosy good humoured face, such as is seldom seen, but with a kind, smiling expression; he was short and fat, yet with that certain clerical air that so very many of the Irish clergymen possess: he had been educated at a French college, for the church; —had served on several missions there, and during the beginning of the frightful disasters of that country, had escaped to his native land, and there obtained a curacy, and from that, was promoted to be parish priest,

of the district in which Coomcarne Park lay. "My dear Manuel," said he, extending his hand; "I see you do not admire my pleasure garden: your dear sister, Miss Charlotte, often threatened me, that she would have those beautiful plants rooted out, and flowers substituted in their places. Poor young thing, I hope she is happy: your father did not answer the Christmas letter she wrote."

"No; Father Owen—he read it, and seemed much affected, and my mother cried much on reading it, and then it was destroyed. I came here to day to remind you that to-morrow will be my birth-day."

"No need to do that, my boy," replied the priest, "I have been reminded of that fifty times this week; there was a regular deputation to me from the hamlet, to consult about arches and bonfires, for the happy day. One old man wished to know how they do these things in foreign parts, for as 'the missus'

was a foreigner, she would like to see the customs of her country just for old acquaintance sake. Another man wanted me to write an address in some 'outlandish tongue,' but then a difficulty arose as to who should read it—at last they have come to the wise conclusion that a plain address, which young John O'Leary is to read, will best suit them, and he has come twenty times to read it over that you may understand him. Never was a sovereign's accession to the throne hailed with greater joy—certainly not with half the sincerity that these poor people will welcome you of age—Oh, their genuine attachment, pure and warm, is delightful, and I fervently hope, my dear Manuel, that you will live many, many happy years among them ;" he wrung the young man's hand affectionately.

"I am quite sure of your good wishes, Father Owen," replied Manuel, "but you must come up to-morrow early, to Coomcarne,

and spend the day with us. On Sunday, I thought I should meet you and engage you."

"It was my turn to go to C—— chapel, and a long ride it is for an old man like me; however, you see exercise agrees with me. I will be with you to-morrow by break of day—will that do?" asked he, laughingly.

"The earlier the better, father Owen," said Manuel, "on the morrow, I wish to petition my father to forgive Charlotte, and I wish for your voice to second my request."

"You shall have it, my boy," answered the priest—"and my blessing on your undertaking."

The parish of which Father MacCarthy was the priest was of great extent, though for the most part extremely poor—he with one curate did all the duty of it—and attended in turns at the only two chapels it then could boast, they were ten miles apart, yet they cheerfully fulfilled their mission; and, how-

ever, great the distance, neither it, nor cold, nor rain prevented their hastening willingly to attend the sick.

Little Mary and Camilla O'Carroll sat next morning in the drawing room, at Coomcarne Park, looking out wistfully at the rain, which fell in torrents.

"What a pity, it is wet?" said Camilla, "our bonfire will not light, and it is so nicely made up."

"It may be dry in the evening, Cammie," said Mary, "and you know, bonfires are never lighted until dark."

"But I intended lighting my little bonfire after breakfast," replied Camilla, "and Manuel would have been so surprised, and so pleased too—Oh! I declare there is a small bit of blue in the sky," added she, clapping her hands gaily—"Oh! 'tis gone now—sister."

"It will come again, Cammie," said Mary.

"What will come again, my little sedate

sister," asked Manuel, coming into the room.

"Don't tell him," urged Cammie.

"But you forget my little pet," said he, kissing her, "that this is my birth-day, and that I am complete master here to-day—so tell me."

"'Twas only a bit of blue sky, brother," said Mary.

"Are you really twenty-one to-day, Manuel?—oh, so old—I should not like to be twenty-one, I would rather be my own age," said Cammie.

"What is in that box, Manuel," asked she, as a servant came in with a large box.

"We will try," said Manuel, and he commenced unpacking—there were two beautiful workboxes, a number of childrens' story-books—a large wax doll, beautifully dressed—and a small writing desk.—The doll is for Cammie—and the desk for Mary—and a box, and six pretty books for each."

"Oh, thank you!—thank you! dear good Manuel," said Cammie, jumping about, "Oh, my beautiful doll, I will call her Lotta, I declare—no mamma might not like that, so I will call her Alicia, Manuel, after your friend, Alicia Masterton"—but Manuel was gone.

"Is not he very good to us?" said Mary, "come, let us call Miss Malden to see them? there is the breakfast bell."

"Father, are you going to the library?" asked Manuel when they rose from the breakfast table.

"If you wish it my son," replied Mr. O'Carroll, and together, they entered the room.

Manuel shut the door, and advanced to the table, near which his father had seated himself.

"Dear father," said he, "I am to-day, of age, and during the whole of my life, I have found you the best, the kindest of fathers, never yet can I remember your refusing me a request—now I hope on this day you will grant

me a favor—a great, and much wished-for favor—on which a great deal of my happiness, and of all our happiness depends—may I trust you will—dear father?”

“Manuel, my dear boy,” replied his father, “there is only one request I could refuse you,”—he paused.

“Father,” said Manuel, “on this day of rejoicing, the dearest of our family circle are away—Henry by his own wish, and Charlotte by her too unthinking marriage—she did wrong, I know it—she is young, and regrets her fault bitterly, I am sure—then on this day, will you grant me forgiveness for her—make her happy and make us all so—say you even forgive her—you need not see her.”

“Manuel,” said his father, much agitated, “this is the only request I could refuse you,” he paused—“your sister has grieved me more than you can know—she was my pride—my best loved child, and she treated me worse than cruelly—had I been a harsh, unkind

father to her it might have been some excuse for her undutiful conduct—but I was ever indulgent to her—I never thwarted her wishes, and this is the return she made me—Manuel, I will try to forget her—but forgive her—I cannot—I will not—never—never”—a tear trembled in his eye—he brushed it away.—“Do not let this refusal annoy you, my dear son—but cheer up now—you must soon,” added he, mildly, “get a wife to fill her place.”

The day continued rainy, yet amid all the rain, the inhabitants of the little hamlet came up to Coomearne Park, and one among them read Manuel a simple, but touching address; he replied to it in a very friendly manner, and concluded by hoping they would all drink his health; and many a hearty cheer, and sincere wish, he got from the assembled crowd.

They returned quietly to their homes, where each family was supplied by Mr. O'Carroll with a good dinner; and the evening clearing

up, they lighted the bonfires, and passed most part of the night in dancing merrily round them.

At Coomcarne Park, a large party met to dine, among them Lord Archgolle, whose regiment was still quartered in W——; and if each of that assembled party in the drawing room before dinner, had spoken their thoughts, they would have said how much they missed Charlotte from among them—and surely had her father known how often her thoughts reverted to them during that day and night, he would have granted her his forgiveness.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER a tedious journey Roland's regiment entered Carlisle, and Charlotte thought, as she drove through the town, she had never seen a more cheerful or prettier place; the extreme neatness of all around delighted her, and she hoped their barrack quarters would correspond with all she saw; but in this she was doomed to feel disappointment. An officer's wife certainly requires to possess a love of neatness.

and regularity, with energy enough to have her rooms kept in order. I have visited many barracks. I have seen the slovenly, ill-regulated, and ill-managed rooms of the fine lady, who is too indolent to exert herself, and whose servants do not regret her negligence. I have seen the cheerful, well-arranged rooms of the active wife, where everything was as it ought to be, and the very plain furniture looked to advantage—and I have marked the difference.

Charlotte's predecessors, in the occupation of her rooms, were a middle-aged lady, her husband, who was generally out amusing himself, and various children of various ages. The lady was too indolent for any exertion—the children ill taken care of; and Charlotte therefore found they had left their quarters in such a dirty and untidy state, she almost despaired of being able to render them as she would wish to see them. Roland was quite enraged when

he saw the rooms that had been allotted them, and he complained of it, but there was no redress, no other quarters could he get. He went out early next morning, in very bad humour, and Charlotte lost not a moment in trying to improve the state of the rooms; and with Ellen, and an assistant's help, she got the sitting room well arranged before dinner hour. Many a time Ellen asked her mistress to desist, that she would fatigue herself, but Charlotte thought nothing a trouble for Roland, and when he came in and praised the metamorphose she had performed on the before dingy apartment, how pleased she felt. During their journey from Edinburgh Charlotte suffered much from Roland's difficulty in being pleased, and very gladly she found herself again settled in barracks.

"You are really a tidy housekeeper, Charlotte," said Roland, surveying the altered rooms next day. I like these quarters now much

better than our Edinburgh ones. I hope we shall be left here some time—moving is so troublesome.”

He had not much of the trouble, however—thanks to his gentle wife’s activity.

“There are some really pretty walks about the town,” continued Roland; “I wandered a good deal about yesterday while you were cleansing and beautifying, so come now, as the day is fine, I’ll lead you a pleasant ramble. We will choose first a ramble on this walk,” said he, leading Charlotte towards that which ascended the hill towards the castle, “for it has very fine views, which you are so fond of.”

It was a beautiful April forenoon, and the spring, unusually forward that year, was in its first beauty. In one part of the walk a rustic seat had been erected, and they sat down, and certainly the scene before them was a lovely one—the pretty town, with the thin,

blue smoke rising gracefully through the clear air, looked well, and the rivers glided on below it, sparkling on their way.

"This day two years," said Charlotte, "I left school. How free I felt when seated by my dear father in the diligence, and I thought I was no longer a school girl, but yet how long that journey from Paris seemed until we reached home."

"You did not think then you would lose your liberty again so soon, Charlotte," said Roland; "or, I suppose if you had any visionary dreams of married life, you were bent on being at least a Duchess, with castles, and coronetted coaches, and jewels innumerable, and servants not to be counted."

"No, indeed," replied she, gaily, "my imagination never led me to such lofty aspirations; my first resolve at all about matrimony was taken at my first ball, which was given at home for me, about a month after my return

from school. I then overheard the conversation of two officers, one of whom declaimed against the present race of young ladies, who were too sensible to make mere love matches, and I resolved that if ever I married it should be for love."

"A very wise resolve, truly," said Roland, "and pray who was the *very* first happy man that strengthened this resolution?"

"You need not ask that, dearest Roland," answered she, tenderly.

"Oh, you know I was not the *first*, Charlotte," exclaimed he.

Just then a gentleman advanced and took off his hat very politely. He addressed Roland with "I beg pardon, sir, but I think I had the honour of meeting you before."

"Possibly, sir," replied Roland, a little haughtily, "but where I don't remember."

"You were some years at S—— College, sir,—were you not?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, sir," said Roland, "I was four years there."

"And don't you remember Hesketh Dalton, for some time a master there," pursued the stranger.

"Oh, indeed, I do," said Roland, rising and taking his hand very friendly, "I should be a dull fellow if I forgot one that so often amused me."

"You see, Percie, I took the liberty of an old acquaintance with you. I called just now at your quarters,—I hope you continue to like the army,—it did not like me much though.—Ha! ha! ha!" and Mr. Dalton indulged in a hearty chuckle.

"I like the army very well," replied Roland; "are you quartered here?"

"You never would believe it, I dare say Percie," said Mr. Dalton, apparently highly pleased with what he was going to communicate, "but I am married.—Ha! ha! ha! I

live at a little snuggerly—you can see it, there, below, on the edge of the river Eden—there the house with the red face.—Ha! ha! ha! Is this your sister?” added he, aside.

Charlotte was still seated on the rustic seat.

“No,” said Roland, “come, I’ll introduce you,” and he advanced to Charlotte, and said, “Charlotte allow me to present you to an old friend of mine,—one who saved me many an hour’s punishment, at S—— college, and who has had the folly to get married.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” chimed in, Mr. Dalton.

“Captain Hesketh Dalton—my wife, Mrs. Percie.”

“Oh, no! not your wife; I know she is your sister; what would a boy like you, do with a wife.—Ha! ha! ha!” said the Captain.

“Your friend, Captain Percie,” said Char-

lotte, gaily, "though a boy, has had the folly to get married."

"When I see you, madam," said Mr. Dalton, very gallantly, "I cannot feel surprised——."

"At his folly, aye?" questioned Roland.

"Mrs. Dalton," continued he, "shall have the honour of calling on you to-morrow, Mrs. Percie, and if we can be of any service to you during your stay in Carlisle, we shall be very happy.

Charlotte thanked him, gracefully.

"Come," said Roland, "you may as well continue your walk with us; I am dying with curiosity to know how you got married."

"Why, my woes and my trials are a long tale," replied the Captain, as he was called, with a "ha! ha! ha! You knew me at S—— college, as a Lieutenant in his Majesty's—— foot. Well, I had been in the army, Percie, sixteen years before then. I left this town,

where I was born, when I was only eighteen, and I saw many a clime and encountered many dangers, and became a Lieutenant, and got the appointment. You knew me at S—— college: well, before I went to the wars, I had lost my heart—I believe most young men do the same—Ha! ha! ha! my lady-love dwelt, not in a cottage, but in a very aristocratic mansion, near the romantic town of Brampton, and as she lost her heart to me, we used sometimes on a Sunday to meet; I thought nothing then of the nine miles walk, backwards and forwards every morning and evening. I went away, each of course had vowed eternal constancy, and all that sort of thing. I returned in two years, still a jolly ensign, and I need not tell you I lost no time in going to Brampton, and seeing my true love; she had been constant, she was then eighteen and I twenty, and she was an only daughter, and entitled to a good fortune; she

had two brothers.—Her mother was dead, but her father lived and idolized her, and well he may,” added he, in a low voice : “ Well, Percie, I urged her to marry me ; she made me apply to her father—he turned me indignantly out of his house, and I vainly tried to make her elope—to leave her fortune there, and to trust to me for support—she could live on a little, she said, but to disobey her father, to marry without his consent, she would not do.”

Charlotte trembled.

“ To shorten my tale,” said Captain Dalton, “ I again left her, her parting words were : ‘ do not despair, we may be happy yet,’ we kept hope alive, and at the end of eighteen years courtship, we were married—ha ! ha ! ha ! her father had died, leaving her mistress of a comfortable fortune—and then she asked me to marry her—ha ! ha ! ha ! she returned my compliment, she said. And now we are ‘ as

happy as the days are long,' as the tale book says—ha! ha! ha!"

What a lesson this little tale conveyed to Charlotte, she pondered on it many a time during the day, and afterwards the real happiness of Mr. Dalton and his wife often brought before her, her own situation—her little strength in complying with Roland's desire of eloping.

CHAPTER XI.

NEXT day, Roland went out early with some of his brother officers on a shooting party, and Charlotte after breakfast sat down to write to her dear Henry, she knew he was soon to return home, and she urged him, if their father consented, to pay her a visit. She had finished the letter, a long affectionate one it was, and sat at her writing desk despite herself instituting a comparison between

her conduct and that of Mrs. Dalton's, when she was roused by a merry laugh outside, she looked into the barrack square, and there she saw, driving a small pony phaeton, Mr. Dalton, and by his side sat a lady, "they are surely coming to visit us," said Charlotte, "I have a great idea of not being at home," but then she remembered he was Roland's friend, and she received him very friendly.

Mrs. Dalton accompanied him, and Charlotte thought they both looked the very personification of happiness.

Mr. Dalton's woes and trials, as he called his life, were varied—the younger son of a country gentleman who possessing but the remnant of a very old estate, could do little to give him the means of support—he entered the army at eighteen, and at six-and-thirty found himself still a Lieutenant, with nothing but his commission to support him—he sold out, and married.

From his childhood he had been blessed

with a very cheerful temper—nothing could ruffle its placidity—every annoyance—every disappointment he resigned himself to with the consolatory reflection—“fretting does no good—I must hope for brighter days,”—or, “better luck next time,” and his gay heart still hoping often almost against hope, kept his spirits up under the most depressing circumstances, and now that love of fortune had favored him, his gaiety was quite infectious. He had the most animated, pleasant countenance—you could not call it a handsome face—nor certainly could you call it a plain one—yet the grey eyes were most sparkling, and the always smiling mouth, disclosed a set of very regular, and very white teeth, and his forehead was well shaped.

Mrs. Dalton appeared older than he did, though in reality she was two years his junior—her face was not handsome either, but its very paleness was interesting, and her sweet contented expression shone in her blue eyes,

and then every thing her husband said, she seemed delighted with.

Charlotte thought them a very enviable pair.

"I hope you like Carlisle, Mrs. Percie," said Mrs. Dalton, in the sweetest, gentlest tones imaginable.

"From what I have seen of it, I do like it extremely," said Charlotte, "the conflux of the three rivers has a pretty effect."

"You have not been here before I suppose Mrs. Percie?" asked Mr. Dalton.

"Yes," replied she, "I passed one night here in January last—when Captain Percie and I were returning to Edinburgh."

"Can you tell me, Mrs. Percie," enquired he, "if Mr. Percie, your father-in-law, is quite well—he occasionally visited S—— college when your husband was there, and I do really think I never met a more agreeable man."

"I am happy in being able to assure you

he is quite well," answered Charlotte, "we passed the Christmas at his vicarage."

After some general conversation, Mr. Dalton asked, "what part of England she was from."

"I am not English," said Charlotte, and she felt herself blush.

"Then Scotch," pursued Mr. Dalton.

"Nor Scotch neither," said she, smiling, and added, "perhaps, you will be shocked to hear, your friend Roland actually married a wild Irish girl."

"You have not the brogue, Mrs. Percie," exclaimed Mrs. Dalton.

"Nevertheless, I am very happy to say I am Irish," said Charlotte, gaily, "and moreover from Munster."

"My best friends were your countrymen, Mrs. Percie," said Mr. Dalton, "I have found them through life, steadfast honest men—always ready to do a kind action, and never heeding their own trouble.—Once in the West

Indies, I should have died of fever, but for an Irishman, whose kindness to me could not be surpassed, and poor fellow, he died afterwards in London of a typhus fever."

"During which, Hesketh attended him day and night, Mrs. Percie," said Mrs. Dalton.

"After that declaration on the part of my wife, I must be off--ha! ha! ha!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton, rising from his chair; and desiring many kind messages to Roland, he took his departure.

"I am anxious to see their 'snuggery,'" said Roland next morning, as he and Charlotte were talking over the visit of the Dalton's, "and as they are such friendly people we may as well return their visit to-day."

She had no objection to do any thing her husband wished, so they set out on foot, the day being fine, and after some trouble they found out Captain Dalton's dwelling. A short avenue led to the house, and through a very white gate, Roland and Charlotte entered it

The road looked as if it had been just swept, and on each side of it was a plantation of about three feet wide, which looked as if the earth had been just dug. There was first a box hedge, looking newly trimmed; and inside this, a row of laurestinas and laurels, alternately, all the very same height—and then came rows of Scotch fir larch, and elms, in the back ground. Charlotte thought she never saw so neat a place. The house was in keeping with the approach to it: it was a small, brick mansion, with windows, the sashes painted so white—a hall door painted such a very bright green—and a small flower-garden opposite, looking so trim. Every thing within was equally in order. Captain Dalton met them in the hall, and welcomed them to Fan-Lodge. “I called it Fan-Lodge after Fanny, my wife,” said he, “and many call it Fun-Lodge.” He ushered them into a very cheerful room, and rang the bell to summon Mrs. Dalton.

She came in immediately, and, holding by

her dress, followed a rosy-cheeked, curly-pated boy, of three years' old, whom his father introduced as the hope of their family; and he led him up to Charlotte.

"Nice, pretty lady," lisped the child, trying to climb into Charlotte's lap.

She took him up, for she was very fond of children, and he was soon the best friend possible with her.

"I have a sweet little sister," said Master Dalton, "and I would bring her to you, only she is asleep."

The visit ended, Captain Dalton walked back to Carlisle, with them and amused her highly, during the walk, with anecdotes of his life. Once he was ice bound, on the northern coast of America, and nearly starved to death—another time he was almost roasted alive with heat, at Sierra Leone—and the remembrance of all only made him laugh, now they were all over.

During the stay of their regiment in Carlisle

the Percies and Daltons were very intimate. The summer came and went, and though Roland often treated Charlotte coldly, she felt she loved him each day more and more. The autumn approached, and the town was all in a bustle, preparing for the races, which were to be held on the "Swifts," on the banks of the Eden. None of the officers took a greater interest in the coming festivities than Roland, and Barton had promised to come to them for the races. Charlotte too anticipated the gaieties, and was determined to try and enjoy them.

A week before the races Barton arrived, very gay. He had quite recovered poor Emma Leslie's death. He remarked to Roland, how very delicate Charlotte looked. "She had had a slight cold, for some days," she said, "it was nothing to signify."

The theatre was opened the night after Barton's arrival, and Roland asked her to come with them to see the performance. She had

some faint misgivings that she did wrong in going to a heated house with a cold, but she was young, and she did not resist the pleasure.

The morning of the races came, and found her, too ill to leave her bed, with a violent inflammation of her lungs.

Roland upbraided her with her carelessness.

She urged him sweetly to enjoy himself, without her; such advice was not necessary, for he was as gay as if she were well, and on the course all day. He attended the ordinaries, and did not come home until very late, and went off early and contented himself with only an enquiry as to how his poor young wife was.

Once during the gaities, he walked into her darkened room; he listened at her bedside, and he knew by her heavy breathing she was asleep, and he went off without disturbing

her ; though had he awakened her a kind word from him would have been more refreshing than the soundest sleep, for in her sickness she deeply felt his neglect.

CHAPTER XII.

TIME, which in general to the young, flies quickly by, to Charlotte appeared to lag with heavy flight, and why?—because she was unhappy. Two years had now passed since her marriage, and each succeeding month marked the increasing carelessness and coldness of her husband, towards her; for the first year he had, at times, apparently been a fond husband, but Charlotte felt he was unsteady in

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his attachment, and how deeply and devotedly she loved him ; his walks with her were given up for rides or drives with some of his gay brother officers ; he was always willing to leave his wife to her solitary dinner, if he were asked to join any merry party.

Charlotte bore his neglect without a murmur, in his presence she was always gay, and he never could complain that she repined at her lot.

Sometimes, at very rare intervals, Roland's better feelings would conquer his love of change and of pleasure, and he would give up for a day or two, any engagements that kept him from home.

Charlotte would bless the chance happiness, and bear with meek resignation his return to his old habits.

Their regiment remained at Carlisle until the spring of the following year, and from thence removed to Chester, and during this

time, Charlotte had heard occasionally of her own family, through the kindness of her sole correspondent, Alicia Masterton, and to her even Roland often prevented her from writing.

Manuel had gone to make a continental tour.

Henry had paid his home a visit of several months, and returned to his German university, with his health seemingly quite re-established, and during his stay, Lord Adrian Wilson had passed a month at Coomcarne Park.

Charlotte had begged of Roland to allow her to ask Henry to visit them, before he returned to Germany, but a refusal from him to have her do so, made her regret she had thought of it.

"Your family, have treated *me* very badly, Charlotte," said Roland, "with *my* leave, you you shall have no communication with them,

and from this day forward, *remember*, you must not continue your correspondence with any of them, nor either with Miss Master-ton.

Poor Charlotte left the room to weep.

Before Henry left, she had a long and very affectionate letter from him, regretting he had not time to visit her; he did not tell the real reason, which was, his father did not wish him to do so.

Charlotte was saved the pang of knowing how much her father still felt her undutiful conduct.

From Chester, in the early summer, they visited Marthorpe Vicarage, and Charlotte being then in very delicate health, found her mother-in-law's kind attentions to her a very great comfort.

They had passed a month here, when Roland received orders, from his Commanding Officer, to join his regiment immediately,

as it was under orders to move to Dublin.

"I think I had better leave you here, Charlotte," said Roland, the evening he heard of their change of quarters, "as your health is not good, you cannot bear the fatigue of the journey."

Oh! do not dear Roland," said she, in a gentle, supplicating tone; "I am so much stronger now, than I was, I can bear any fatigued indeed," and tears rose in her eyes, for she feared if she were left at Marthorpe Vicarage, how careless he would become, and how long she might be left there."

"Very well," replied Roland, coldly enough, "as I have a wife, I suppose I must take her as well as my luggage," and he went off whistling.

When they reached Chester, they found a new Officer and his wife had joined in their absence, the latter an uneducated English-

woman was in the greatest state of agitation at the very idea of going to Ireland, however, her husband would not give heed to her alarms, so she found herself obliged to go.

From Liverpool the troops sailed for Dublin, and the morning of the day they landed there, being beautifully fine, all the officers of the regiment, and some of their wives, were seated on deck, among the latter was Charlotte, gazing intently on the shores of her native land, and near her was the new officer's lady, Mrs. Sheepshanks.

"You've no idear how nervous I feel at the prospect at living in Ireland," exclaimed the latter to an officer that stood near her. "Are the Hirish really so savage, as I hear, Major Jervis?" asked she.

"I never found them savage, ma'am," replied the Major, coldly. He was not a man of many words, but his son, a young Ensign, was, and he, hearing Mrs. Sheepshanks' ques-

tion, determined to have some fun with her.

"My father, Mrs. Sheepshanks," said he smilingly, "does not know the Irish so well as I do; they are, in truth, nothing better than mere savages."

The Major walked off to the other end of the deck.

Charlotte listened amused, despite her sad feelings.

Oh! dear me," said Mrs. Sheepshanks.

"And," continued young Jervis, "they are a most blood-thirsty nation, having no more regard for a dozen lives of human men or women, than I would for the same number of birds, were I on a shooting party: they are clad savagely—they live in savage huts, not unlike the Indians' wigwam, and they fight with awful weapons of their own construction, which they manufacture in the woods, and these they manage very dexterously; they

seldom eat flesh meat, but they manage to swallow deep potation of what many consider rank poison. Then when a relation die, the friends and neighbours all collect around the corpse, and howl and shriek in such a manner that you may fancy you are living in the ages of ancient Rome. Oh, Ireland wants civilization, for my part, I shall take care not to expose myself unnecessarily to these savages," and he glanced at Charlotte, whom he saw understood him.

"Oh! what shall I do?" exclaimed Mrs. Sheepshanks, in terrified tones.

"While the regiment remain in Dublin," said young Jervis, fearing she would expose him, "you may consider yourself pretty safe, and Mrs. Percie will tell you these Irish are not always so ferocious."

"Were you ever in Ireland, Mrs. Percie?" enquired Mrs. Sheepshanks turning to Charlotte.

"Yes," was Charlotte's sole reply, for she felt no pity for one so ignorant.

"And were you ever attacked or robbed by these savages?"

"Never, indeed," answered she, unable to restrain a smile.

"I hear too," continued Mrs. Sheepshanks, "the Irish brogue is so dreadful, there's no understanding it, and then the names of the people are so frightful, one cannot pronounce them, and that they eat without knives or forks, or sometimes plates."

"It is true," replied Charlotte, "many of the Irish names are difficult to be pronounced, and many seem 'frightful' if you will to English ears—but compare the brogue bad as it is occasionally to the patois spoken in the country parts of England—or even to the 'cockney' of London; and you may find one is as palatable to the ears as the other—for my part, I prefer the brogue in its worst state, for there

is something of intellect generally found with it, to the almost boorish dialect of your Shires. then the Irish names may bear comparison with most of the English ones : O'Shaugnessy, O'Donoghue, O'Carroll, MacCarthy, O'Sullivan, O'Connell, and other milesian names, are quite as pronounceable and as refined, to my taste at least—as Redshanks, Slaughter, Higgenbotham, Tadhunter, Pigg, Hogg, Cockshoot, Twopenny.'

"And Woodcock, Sparrow, Wren, Partridge, Duck, Swan, Salmon, Trout, Crow, Lamb, Kidd, Wolfe, Monkey, and innumerable other names, which pleasantly remind one of animated nature," said young Jervis, who was a very pleased listener of Charlotte's—and himself a Welshman, of an old family, felt he could laugh at the English names.

"Well really, I'd no *idear*," said Mrs. Sheepshanks; but what her *idear* was she left her hearers in uncertainty about, but evidently

she felt somewhat offended at the list of names. Her own name had been Plover, and her present cognomen was not very pretty.

Charlotte saw she felt hurt, and she said, gently, "I am Irish, Mrs. Sheepshanks, therefore you will not be surprised at my warmth, and I hope, before you leave my country, you will like it, as one must do when they know it."

Mrs. Sheepshanks, however, was not so easily conciliated. She soon rose from her seat, and went to her cabin.

Charlotte undisturbed thought of *home*, and all that had made it dear.

"I admire your country, dear Charlotte," said Roland, coming and seating himself near her, as the vessel sailed calmly on through that beautiful Dublin bay, and feeling, despite him, a tenderness towards his poor young wife.

She delightedly pointed out all the localities,

and much of her sad feelings at coming again to Ireland, were dispelled by his attentions during that sail.

CHAPTER XIII.

DUBLIN is a fine—yes, a noble city. Let travellers condemn it, if they will, and Charlotte felt proud of it, as Roland, for the first week of his stay there, praised its squares and its fine streets, and, above all, its spacious park. The Percies had been settled there nearly three weeks, and all the officers of the regiment were loud in extolling the hospitality they experienced from its inhabitants. Charlotte's delicate state of health—she was near her first

confinement—prevented her participating in the gaieties, but she felt delighted that Roland should enjoy himself. One very beautiful July afternoon, in the Phoenix Park, they were stopped and accosted by young Jervis, and with him were two young men, whom he introduced to Charlotte as Mr. Edmund and Mr. Thomas O'Neill. She remembered them as young lads, living in the town of W——, but she had not seen them since she left school; she blushed the brightest crimson at the introduction, and Mr. Edmund O'Neill, recognising her, said :

“It is many years now since we met Mrs. Percie. I have only been in town a week, and I came hither direct from W——. I left all your family well. I saw your father the very day before I started. Tom and I dined at Coomcarne Park.”

She bowed her thanks,—she felt she could make no enquiries.

Charlotte's deep feelings about her own

family may appear overdrawn ; but then, be it remembered, her nature was peculiarly affectionate and sensitive. She had been brought up the idol of that family—she felt her fault towards them, and she too felt their just displeasure at it.

“ Well, Percie,” said young Jervis, gaily—
“ I’ve settled our business, and not a small share of trouble I had. Your absence was first objected to, on the score of having been a wanderer lately ; and then my governor objected to my going, on the score, I believe, that I did not know how to behave myself ; but that objection I soon overruled, and so all is right now. You must settle the time of starting, and the route O’Neill will arrange.

“ I am obliged to you, my dear fellow,” replied Roland ; “ but tell me who make up our party ?”

“ Why,” answered Jervis, “ in the first place, Captain Percie—a sedate, trustable person—

to whom we look, Mrs. Percie," said he, bowing to Charlotte, "for advice and guidance, or, as young ladies would say, "to matronise us; then there are two Milesians, by name O'Neill, lineal descendants of 'Con, of the hundred fights,' to point out the way, not to glory, but to the picturesque; there is Lieutenant Primrose, who can sing, smoke, and sketch; and Lieutenant Reginald Willoughby, who can drink, dance, and drive four in hand; and, though last, not least, very assuredly, in his own opinion—Ensign Piers ap Llwellyn ap Griffith ap Evan ap Jervis,—a young gentleman of parts, particularly of speech, who enjoys life and does not allow care to darken his horizon. Surely such a *party* were never seen so justly formed to meet by nature."

"We shall be gay, at any rate, I hope," said Roland; "you had better," added he, turning to the O'Neills, "come into my quarters this evening with Jervis, and we will

arrange the preliminaries, and Mrs. Percie will give us tea, and some advice too—won't you Charlotte?"

"With great pleasure you shall have both," replied she, gracefully, bowing *au revoir*.

Jervis and his companions went off, and the Percies pursued their drive.

Roland told Charlotte it had been his wish, since he came to Ireland, to make a tour through the country, that the young men she heard mentioned were anxious to join him, and that now they had obtained a short leave of absence—"only a month," said he.

Tears, despite her, rose in Charlotte's eyes, but she took care he should not see them, and she tried to converse on ordinary subjects with her husband, during the remainder of the drive.

The evening came and brought the young men punctually, and Charlotte presided at her tea-table, and gave her advice about the various

routes, as gaily and as sweetly as if she were to be one of the party.

"We shall not mind a visit to the Giant's Causeway, this time," said Roland, "you must remember how limited our time is."

"Not so limited, my prudent Captain," replied Jervis, "we have full six weeks, and, with a little expedition, ordinary mortals may see a great deal in that time."

"Agree to a pilgrimage to the north, by all means," said the elder O'Neill, "the views along the northern coasts will amply repay you."

"Then we can slope round to that unpronounceable province, Con-nowght, as poor dear Mrs. Sheepahanks would say," observed Jervis; "see all the lakes there—the wilds of—of—what, O'Neill?"

"Of Connemara," replied O'Neill.

"Then whither shall we bend our course, Mrs. Percie?—do direct us," said young Jervis.

"You could go down the upper Shannon, to Limerick," answered she, "the scenery on it is really beautiful; it forms several lakes, but Lough Derg is the most to be admired. Tourists, I think," added she, smiling, "should be allowed to admire where they please, simply shewn the routes, and allowed unbiassed opinion."

"Then you would condemn guide-book paragraphs of—'a hill gently undulating,'—clothed with varied foliage sloping to the water's edge,—'a prospect unsurpassed,' rich woodlands, and hoary ruins," said Jervis, laughing.

"Certainly," answered Charlotte; "I should prefer guide books giving merely the routes, and distances, and advice as to conveyances, but not calling forth one's admiration—forcing it, I may say—a tourist goes travelling with the intention of admiring."

"From Limerick," said Thomas O'Neill;—"we can reach Killarney in a day."

"The coach road is, for the most part, uninteresting," said Charlotte. "I would recommend going down the Shannon to Tarbert, from thence to Tralee, and then on to Killarney."

"You will give us a sketch of a tour, dear Charlotte," said Roland, feeling delighted with her sweet temper, "and then we can follow it, if we please. This is Monday, 31st of July. Well, we cannot start before Wednesday, so you will write it for me to-morrow."

"I am very sorry you are not to be one of our party, Mrs. Percie," said the younger O'Neill, "I remember long ago you used to be fond of rural excursions."

"But now I am grown steady," said Charlotte, forcing a smile, "and you know variety it is, that is so charming in these tours, I have seen all the lions of my country—some more than once—but," added she, "I shall hear all your adventures with great pleasure, over a cup of tea, the night after your return to Dublin."

"We shall expect something wonderful, Charlotte," said Roland, with a slight sneer, "the invitation is so long."

She remembered Lord Adrian's acceptance of her first invitation, since which she had never asked a guest."

"We may have something wonderful to tell Mrs. Percie," said young Jervis, gaily; "I expect to be able to fill several volumes with accounts, of all we shall hear and see, suffer and enjoy. I intend paying Mrs. Sheepshanks a visit of adieu to-morrow. I must tell you, Mrs. Percie, that I am now re-instated in the first exalted opinion she conceived of my good sense and profound learning—which *our* attack on English cognomens, none of our selections very euphonious, rather lowered. Two days after her arrival in this 'dirty town,' as she calls it.—She had occasion to go to a shop, in leaving which, she was accosted by a raggedly dressed beggar woman with a legion of unwashed and almost undressed children—the

women addressed her in her native Irish, and poor Mrs. Sheepshanks terrified, hastily retreated into the shop—never had she seen such a group—she felt rather shy at disclosing her fears, as she told me, so she bought something she had no occasion for, and came to the door, hoping the objects of her dread had vanished—but no—there they stood—and worse still, the number had been added to, by a sturdy-looking countryman, with a big shillalagh in his hand—his garments were too rather tattered—shoes nor stockings he had not, and only part of a hat—and he joined the woman in vociferating the demand, in the barbarous tones that had before sounded on her appalled senses. ‘What shall I do,’ thought she—she summoned courage—she stepped from the shop—the beggars dreading losing their chance of a penny, loudly begged in their frightful accents—one sturdy brat ran before, and holding up his hand, said, ‘a pinny, a pinny,’—the man and woman and children

followed imploringly—she rushed into a cake shop—there I was regaling myself—I heard her tale with pretended alarm—secretly I gave the beggars some change to divide amongst them, hoping they would fight for it, and taking Mrs. Sheepshanks by the arm, I hurried her on—the beggars followed quickly with many blessings I could understand—I slipped a sixpence out of my pocket, and threw it amongst them, there was a yell and a halloo—the man being the finder, gave a grand pirouette on the flags before us, brandishing his shillelagh, this was the finale to poor Mrs. Sheepshanks' dread, she screamed violently, and despite my assurances that these savages meant no harm, she retreated into a house, and came home in a coach, secretly resolved never to go walking again while in Ireland."

"My poor country, said Charlotte, "has a very indifferent advocate in you."

"My love of fun is stronger than either my good-nature, or my love of justice," exclaimed

Jervis, "I will own my fault, and hope you will forgive me; Mrs. Percie, and say good-night, like a christian—and wish me a very pleasant journey through your green isle."

"I will, conditionally," said she.

"And the conditions," asked Jervis, "I will enter into any treaty, so as you sign peace."

"They are," said Charlotte, "that if on your return from your travels, you have to tell of either inhospitality—or rudeness practised towards you by my countrymen or women, or if you see nothing in the natural beauties to admire—you continue to abuse Ireland and the Irish—and to lead others astray in their opinions of them—but if on the contrary you meet with the warmest hospitality and politeness, and that the scenery surpasses your expectations—then you will consider yourself bound in honor and honesty to speak fairly, and even praisingly of the country and its inhabitants—these are my conditions—do you accede to them?"

"Most willingly, Mrs. Percie," replied he gaily, "and if I fail in them, may I be hanged, drawn, and quartered as a traitor, and my bones left to whiten unburied in the Phoenix Park, a warning to the foresworn and false."

"Then I wish you good-night, and very pleasant rambles," said Charlotte.

"You have made a complete fool of yourself, with all your girlish enthusiasm, Charlotte," said Roland, sneeringly to her, when the young men had taken their departure. "I wish to heaven you would always remember you are married."

And all next day she was employed for her husband; on the Wednesday morning he took his departure—Charlotte was up early to have breakfast for him.

"Won't you write to me, Roland," said she, "remember it is our first separation since our marriage."

"It is not likely I shall have time," replied he, coldly.

"And if any letters come for you, Roland," pursued Charlotte, "whither shall I send them?"

She hoped he would desire her to write to him.

"Don't send them at all," said Roland, "open them, if you please—and burn them, if you like.—He took up his hat, kissed Charlotte, not very affectionately, and hurried off to his gay companions.

CHAPTER XIV.

POOR Charlotte watched Roland cross the barrack yard, and when he disappeared she wept plentifully :—there he had left her in a barracks alone, near her confinement ; she that had left so much for him, and her heart swelled within her. She soon roused herself—six weeks would quickly pass, and she brought her work table near the open window, and she sat there during that long morning, making clothes for her expected baby. Ellen entered

with a letter—she started—it was for Roland, and marked *immediate*, she knew not where to send it; she remembered his injunctions to open his letters, and she broke the seal, the writing was strange, and merely a few lines from a London shopkeeper, enclosing a bill, and saying if speedy payment were not made, he would have recourse to legal proceedings to insure it.—The bill was for a saddle, two bridles, a silver mounted whip, and other articles, forwarded to Roland before the Carlisle races the year before.

Charlotte glanced at the amount—she examined her very small stock of money, it was barely sufficient to support her until her husband's return—it was not the third of the bill—what could she do?—she had ornaments—beautiful pearls—she would sell them—she took them from their case—the necklace, the ear-rings, the brooch, the bracelets—her dear parents' gifts, could she part with them—there were these parents miniatures smiling so sweetly

on her—she took up her mother's—she unclasped it from the bracelet, and she hesitated, but soon her resolve was taken—what, did she compare her own selfish feelings with the good of her husband—would she for the sake of a necklace, however beautiful, let her husband's name suffer reproach—oh ! no—she hated herself for the thought—she would sell them, and everything else she had, rather than he should suffer any annoyance.

She took the pictures off, she folded carefully round them nice silver paper, and put them into her dressing box—the pearls she put together, and she longed for the night, when she should sell them ; she wrote a letter to the London shopkeeper, saying she enclosed the money, and the letter she left unsealed, determined to send it by the morning's post.

Her dinner was soon finished, but it was past ten o'clock when she considered it sufficiently dark to venture out—she wrapped her-

self in a large cloak, put on a close bonnet and veil, and with Ellen gained the street unnoticed.

The day had been extremely close and lowering, the rain now fell in torrents, but this Charlotte was glad of, for she thought no one would be out such a night.

She reached the Jeweller's shop, where the pearls had been bought, she hesitated at the door—"they may recognise them here," thought she, and she turned away, and passed through various streets until she found another Jeweller's shop; it was brilliantly lighted up, and she remained some minutes at the door waiting to have a customer leave; he was just leaving when a carriage pulled up at the door, and a gentleman muffled in a large cloak, descended from it, and passing Charlotte, entered the shop.

"Are the diamonds ready?" he asked of one of the assistants, and Charlotte thought she knew the voice.

The Jeweller stepped forward and handed him a casket, which he quickly opened, and she saw its contents gleam brightly. The gentleman took off his hat and held the casket towards the light, and exclaimed :

“ They are beautiful diamonds, Mr. Henley, I am greatly pleased with them.”

Charlotte quickly recognised Lord Archgolle. She did not start, but remained still, in the shade of the door-way, and she heard the price of the diamonds named,—an immense sum it seemed to her. She saw Lord Archgolle write a check on his banker, for the amount, and she marked the obsequious bows of the Jeweller.

“ When you get the pearls, you will let me know, Mr. Henley,” said Lord Archgolle ; “ and now give me some wedding rings of a small size—and if you have any handsome guard rings, I’ll look at them too. He took them, seeming very careful in the selection, and quitted the shop. The carriage step was let down,

Lord Archgolle stopped at the shop door, and pulled out some money, and, evidently mistaking Charlotte and Ellen for mendicants, he held it towards them, saying, "Here—take take this, and for God's sake go home, this dreadfully wet night."

"No, no," murmured Charlotte, and she turned away.

Did she regret not being Lord Archgolle's bride?—ah ! no, she would not exchange her husband for all the world beside ; they little know of her depth of tenderness and love that could think she did.

Lord Archgolle, little fancying whom he had addressed, stepped into his carriage, and drove away ; but, despite him, that night, when he sat by his affianced bride and talked of all their future plans, the image of his first-love, Charlotte O'Carroll, rose to his memory.—"I should like to know she is as happy as she deserves to be," was his constant thought.

Charlotte, when she no longer heard the

noise of the carriage wheels, returned to the shop, and, summoning up all her courage, asked the Jeweller if he would purchase ornaments?

"I'll give you value for them, certainly," replied Mr. Henley.—"Show them, ma'am," and she produced her pearls.

He seemed greatly pleased; and she overheard him say to one of his assistants, "Aye, Peter,—these will suit, exactly, the bride-elect."

"These pearls were only worn six times, sir," said Charlotte. "You see they are quite perfect. I took good care of them," and her voice faltered a little.

"Do you remember their original price, ma'am?" asked the Jeweller.

Charlotte named it.

"Do you require ready money for them?" enquired he.

"Yes, sir," replied she, "I must get it to-night."

"Well, well, ma'am, so you shall. Will ten pounds less than their original price satisfy you?"

"Most amply, sir," said Charlotte, delighted to get so fair a sum for them.

The Jeweller could afford to act generously towards her, for he knew he should get his own price—however exorbitant—from Lord Archgolle.

"Ladies," said an assistant, "if you sit down in this room, Mr. Henley will soon have the money for you," and he ushered Charlotte and Ellen into a small back-parlour; and here they were left nearly an hour, during which time they overheard most of the conversation going on in the shop.

One assistant descanted very loudly to another assistant, on all the ornaments Lord Archgolle had bought.

"He is a fine nobleman, indeed," quoth one.

"He gave me a half sovereign once, for

taking a parcel from this to the hotel," said the other.

"He values money no more than I do dirt," exclaimed the first speaker, which latter pleasant possession this assistant might in truth be said to value, for he seemed to preserve it carefully about his person.

"And the lady he is getting has no fortin' I hear," said the second, "but is handsome and clever."

"Well, I know a deal about his lordship," said the not *clean* assistant, "for my cousin's wife's brother-in-law, is his own servant, and he assured Kitty—that is my cousin german's wife—that Lord Archgolle, was for sometime determined never to marry at all, at all.—That he was once going to be married to a grand and beautiful lady, an Irish lady she was—but she had lived all her life nearly in foreign parts—and a dirty turn she did Lord Archgolle—every thing was ready for the wedding, when my lady leaves him

there, and goes off with some foreigner, that she knew abroad."

"And what became of her?" enquired the second assistant, seemingly greatly interested in the tale.

"Why," responded the other, "Mr. Connery—that is Kitty's brother-in-law, was not quite sure—he believed she had gone to the wars with her husband, and that they were very poor."

"Well, I declare the lady did right, not to give up the poor man, for the rich man," ejaculated the second speaker, who had a touch of romance in his composition, "I wish her well, where ever she is."

A call from Mr. Henley prevented Charlotte's being more enlightened.

Soon after the Jeweller brought her the money; she took it with many thanks, and quickly regained the barracks. She enclosed the money to the shop-keeper, and felt happy when the letter was sealed and sent to the post. How soundly she slept that night, for

anxiety is tiresome, and her evening walk was not short.

And, Roland,—did he think of his young wife, that night?—His party was a merry, rather a dissipated one, and each on retiring to rest, had drunk a little too much.

CHAPTER XV.

NEXT morning Charlotte rose early, but a feeling of sickness made her soon return to her bed, and Ellen rather frightened called in a doctor—poor Charlotte amid all the pangs she suffered that day, thought of him, who should have been there, comforting and soothing her; but she forgot all her pains, when before evening she found herself the mother

of a healthy boy, and what happiness she felt in gazing on his little face.

The doctor declared he never attended so docile an invalid, her sole care or wish seemed to be quite well again and strong before her husband's return, and to have their son thriving before him.

What an attentive young mother she was, and very surely she thought there never was seen such a baby.

In three weeks Charlotte was quite well, and before the month closed, the doctor ordered her to take a drive—her first drive was to a Catholic church, where she was to get her boy baptized—Roland had once promised, he would leave the direction of their childrens' religion to her, and she resolved to profit now by his promise—she hired a covered vehicle, and with Ellen and her infant well wrapt up in warm clothing, she drove to a chapel, and there got her boy baptized, and called Roland,

for no name was so dear to her. Her mother and her brother Henry she named as sponsors, Ellen personated the former, and the clerk the latter.

It was a beautiful bright September morning when they drove homewards through the streets of Dublin; their vehicle had entered one of the principal squares, and was driving across it, when its progress was arrested by a very dense crowd. The driver stopped, descended from his box, and touching his hat, asked "if he might wait a few minutes—for ma'am the round is mighty long, and by waiting here till the crowd go on, we shall save time, and see the fun," the latter consideration seeming to have the greatest weight.

"What is going on?" asked Ellen.

"Only the wedding, Miss," replied the man, "see there is there is the coach and four, all decked out with white bows."

Charlotte looked out, and driving up through

the crowd, which slowly made way for it, was a very handsome travelling carriage, with four horses with white favors in their heads—the carriage stopped at the door of a very fine house, amid the cheers and huzzas of the multitude—the house door opened, and servants in handsome liveries came out, and were all cheered—the carriage door was opened, the steps let down, and an elderly gentleman appeared leading a lady in bridal attire, her face was covered completely with a thick blonde veil—the father, for such he was, had a fine countenance, and seemed very happy—he handed his daughter to the carriage, and cheer upon cheer rent the air.

“ Oh, thin, long life to ye, Councillor Mac-Donnell, and more luck to ye’re family—for ’tis ye’re the friend of the poor.”

“ God bless ye,” exclaimed an old woman, near Charlotte’s humble vehicle.

The lady was seated in the carriage, and

Charlotte saw, hurry down the steps from the hall door, a gentleman, who shook hands warmly with the bride's father—he took off his hat to some ladies in the windows, and Charlotte recognized Lord Archgolle, he sprung to the carriage, the door was shut, he flung money from the window, and the bridal chariot moved on with many blessings and good wishes, loud and long.—It passed close to where our heroine was—she was too feminine in every feeling to show herself to the lover she had refused; and he drove off to spend the honeymoon in the county of Wicklow. The crowd dispersed, and Charlotte regained her home, for the time.

“Ellen, you must go out, and buy me some finery for Master Roland,” said Charlotte to her next morning, “a very pretty cap, and frock, and some ribbons, pink and blue, I think, and the dear little fellow will look so well.”

This was her first piece of extravagance for a long time; since Roland's gambling she had been very economical—her dress, though always neat, was of the simplest material possible, and the least expensive, and many comforts she had denied herself, fearing to infringe on her husband's pay.

"I have a right," thought she, "to this money," as she gave Ellen some to buy the dress for her baby.

During her absence, she sat on a low chair, with the infant in her lap, and talked to him incessantly of his dear papa: "Oh, he will love you so, my bonnie baby," said she, "and you will smile on him, as you are doing now, and open your beautiful eyes—what a dark blue they are, and you will soon know him—and laugh, and crow for him, and put out your little fat hands to him—I wish I knew, if they have heard of your birth at home—Ellen told me she saw it in a Dublin paper last week—

and how fond your little aunts would be of you—I cannot write to tell them—no—Roland would not wish it—Will they ever forgive me? —I will send you to them when you grow up, and they cannot refuse you, my darling boy.” And the darling boy was nearly smothered with kisses—a proof of affection he by no means relished, for he kicked his displeasure manfully, and even uttered something like a discontented squall. But the young mother’s voice soon soothed him to slumber. How steady and careful she was for her age, then little more than twenty.

The evening passed quickly to Charlotte, she had converted the sitting room during Roland’s absence into a second nursery—it was a cheerful room, with a southern aspect—her baby’s cradle was placed near the fireplace, in which a cheerful fire blazed for his use and benefit, and near it she sat working.

The frock and cap Ellen had bought were both too small for Master Roland, and she was adding to them.

She was startled by the baby's moaning, and looked at him, she felt his little hand, it was burning hot, and he continued to moan, she called to Ellen in great alarm, "I am afraid the baby is ill, Ellen," said she, rather faintly.

"Don't be alarmed, ma'am," replied Ellen, steadily, "I'll call the doctor."

The good-natured doctor soon came, Charlotte had interested him extremely.

Certainly doctors require to have at heart a fund of good-nature and kindness—so much lies in their power when they are benevolent; misery and misfortune they daily witness, and how much they can do to alleviate both, if kindly disposed. A kind word with advice, is easily given—and what comfort it may bring. A doctor going through the business of his

profession, thinking only of gain—without a kind or pitying feeling for the sufferings he witnesses, is little better than a monster in human form.—Advice he gives, not gratis, and how harshly he treats the poor applicant who appeals to his humanity.

The oft quoted lines have deep truth in them :—

“ Many a word at random spoken,
Can wound or heal a heart that's broken.”

Doctor M—— who so quickly obeyed Ellen's summons, was every thing a physician ought to be—he had studied his profession and knew it well—and he was feelingly alive to the duties it entailed on him—gain was not his sole object—and many a poor invalid having neither money to pay for advice, nor money to buy medicines, blessed his charity.

“ There is no cause of alarm, Mrs. Percie,”

said Doctor M—— kindly feeling the baby's little hand, and seeing the young mother's affrighted look and tearful eye, "I am afraid though you are not yet a very experienced nurse—did you give the baby any food besides his natural sustenance, and what I ordered?"

"I only gave him a cup of bread and milk, Doctor M——" replied Charlotte, "I thought he seemed hungry—and I wanted to have him fat and healthy-looking, for his papa's return," and she blushed a little.

But Doctor M—— knew her love for both father and child, and he very gently chided her—told her "she should in future follow his advice strictly."

She promised.

"Your little son has had too much food, Mrs. Percie—but to-morrow, you will see he will be quite well, by following the prescription I shall send you."

Charlotte that long night remained by her baby's cradle.

Next day the doctor seeing her pale looks, guessed the truth, and he spoke seriously to her, about injuring her own health.

She promised to attend to his advice; for the sake of her child, she might have added, it was, she did so.

CHAPTER XVI.

AND how did Roland all this time enjoy his rambles? Did his thoughts often revert to his young wife? His excursion was delightful to him, who so loved pleasure and variety, and his companions were as gay as he was, and as much inclined to enjoy themselves. They made their proposed tour, and five weeks of their absence was expired when they reached Cork. The night of their arrival a grand public ball

took place in that city, to which they all determined to go.

"I intend to pass to-night as an unmarried man," said Roland, as they ascended the stairs of the hotel, where the ball was—so none of you betray me."

The scene was a very gay one, but, amid all the beauty and youth assembled there that night, Roland acknowledged to himself there was not one to compare with his young wife. He wandered about for some time, gazing on each merry group as he passed them. Jervis engaged in eager conversation with a very juvenile and pretty girl, attracted his attention; he seemed enjoying himself to his heart's content; the young lady took Jervis' arm, and, crossing the room to join the dancers, he accosted Roland.

"Remember your resolve, most gay Captain," said he, merrily, "before you entered the ball-room—why don't you join the dance? Trip it on the light, fantastic toe."

"I am not so fortunate as you have been, Jervis," replied Roland.

"Apply to the stewards, as I did—they are most civil and polite;—have courage and caution—aye," and Jervis went off with his partner.

During the dance that followed, Roland felt quite amused watching them. Jervis took his lady to a seat near her chaperone, and really, being a gay fellow, he wished all to enjoy themselves, and he came over to Roland.

"I protest, Percie, I never had a pleasanter half-hour than the last," exclaimed he; "these Cork ladies are the best flirts I ever met. Shall I introduce you to my partner?"

"Oh, no," said Roland, "I would not interfere with you—honor bright. I leave you a clear stage. She seems pretty."

"And she is the merriest creature you ever met," said Jervis, with a most piquant brogue; "my maxim, you know, is '*quand on n'a pas a. que l'on aime, il faut aimer ce que l'on a,*' and

I am making fierce love to this 'Cynthia of the minute,' whom, it is more than probable, I shall never meet again."

"And you're resolved she shall remember you *côté qui côté*?" asked Roland.

"I'm resolved she shall amuse me," replied Jervis, "and I'll amuse her—a fair bargain," and he sauntered off towards his attraction.

Roland looked round;—he saw the elder O'Neill shake hands very affectionately with a young lady, and seat himself near her, and enter into a lively conversation with her. She was plainly dressed, and, though not handsome, had a sweet, gentle expression when she smiled; she reminded him of Charlotte—not in feature, but in expression. He longed to know who she was, and he walked round the room in search of the younger O'Neill. He found him disengaged, and he brought him before the object of his curiosity.

"It is my cousin Alicia, by all that's lovely," exclaimed the young man, and he darted from

Roland, and saluted her very friendly. In a few minutes he returned, and apologised for his abruptness.

"She is one of my favourite cousins, Percie," said he, "so you must kindly excuse me. She is a nice, gentle creature, and well-informed."

"Oh, cousins are sometimes very dangerous," observed Roland, sily.

"No likelihood of what you insinuate," replied O'Neill. "I rather fancy Alicia's heart is the property of a relative of yours."

"Of mine," exclaimed Roland, thinking only of his own family—"how can she know them?"

"Why, seeing she has passed all her life among them," said O'Neill, "it is not very surprising."

"In what part of England did she live?" enquired Roland.

"In England," said O'Neill, laughing, "I

don't think Alicia ever left Ireland; but I should say connexion, not relative," added he. Your brother-in-law, Manuel O'Carroll, is, I guess, the happy man."

"Oh, indeed," said Roland; "and what is her name?"

"Masterton," answered O'Neill.

"Alicia Masterton," exclaimed Roland, "my wife's very particular friend. You must introduce me; but let it be under a feigned name, and I'll have some amusement."

"As you will," said O'Neill, good humouredly; what *nom de guerre* will you choose?"

"Let it be Captain Percival," replied Roland, and as such he was presented to Alicia Masterton, and engaged her to dance.

"I have heard the Cork ladies have a peculiar *penchant* for red-coated gentry," said Roland, to Alicia—is it true?"

"I cannot answer, Captain Percival, for the taste of the Cork ladies," replied Alicia, "as I

am not one; but all young ladies, in general, are accused of preferring officers to other beaux."

"And can you account for the reproach on your sexes' good taste?" asked Roland.

"I can, partly," answered Alicia, "if reproach you call it; officers, in general, are more entertaining than the other partners that fall to our lot in a ball room; they are well-educated men—have mixed in good society, and generally have travelled; and when they condescend to be agreeable," added she, smiling, "without amusing themselves at our expense, they are pleasant acquaintances to make."

"But I would lay a wager," said Roland, "if Miss Masterton were now to choose a husband, she would seek one sooner in the fields of Ceres than in the fields of Mars. I remember a friend of mine, Manuel O'Carroll, used to say—but no matter, I shall not quote him as authority."

"Where did you know him, Captain Percival?" asked Alicia, eagerly, a tinge of red overspreading her cheeks.

"Neither in England nor Ireland, I assure you, Miss Masterton," replied Roland.

"Then you met him lately?"

"Not very lately."

Alicia, dreading to appear too inquisitive, said :

"I came, some days since, from W——, with his father and mother."

"Are they in the room?" asked Roland, a slight feeling of awkwardness arising in his mind.

"Oh! no," answered Alicia; "but they are staying at this hotel. They had business in Cork, and hearing of this ball, they invited me to come hither with them for it—they are the kindest and best of friends to me."

"I think," said Roland, as carelessly as he could, "there is a daughter of theirs married to a Captain Percie, in our regiment—a lady

that once must have been handsome, with dark eyes, pale, and very thin."

"Oh! do you know Mrs. Percie?" enquired Alicia, anxiously. "She was, indeed, very handsome, and must be so too, for she is only twenty."

"I do know her," answered Roland; but she seems a very domestic character—rarely stirring out—and her husband is, I am afraid, not over attentive."

"Oh! don't say so, pray don't," said Alicia, imploringly. "Mrs. Percie was my most dear friend—the friend of my childhood, and my girlhood; but I have not heard from her for a long time—her husband must love her, for she is all gentleness and amiability."

"You seem a partial friend, Miss Master-ton," observed Roland. "I heard she eloped, and that her family had not forgiven her, and that she was unhappy in consequence."

"Dear Charlotte," said Alicia, in a low tone, "your baby boy will bring you happiness."

"Has he a son?" asked Roland, with very genuine surprise.

"Nearly a month ago I saw its birth advertised in the Dublin paper," replied Alicia.

"And did it say anything of the mother?" enquired Roland.

"Nothing," replied Alicia, "her death would be the only notice, and thank God that was not there."

"Oh, thank God," murmured Roland—he paused, and thought of his son—strange that he should thus learn he was a father—and during the whole of that night he paid Alicia the most marked attention; she was the only one he got introduced to, and Jervis gaily rallied him on his "*tendresse*."

"I shall be going to W—— to-morrow, Miss Masterton," said Roland, in saying good night, "and thence, direct to Dublin—where I shall see your friend, Mrs. Percie—and if you have any message or commands to

her, I shall feel honored by your entrusting them to me."

"Thank you, very much, Captain Percival," replied Alicia; "and if you did not think me troublesome, I will confide to your care a small parcel for Charlotte,—I mean Mrs. Percie."

"I am staying at —— hotel, in Georges Street, Miss Masterton," said Roland, "and any commands sent there before twelve o'clock to-morrow—or rather to-day, for it is nearly six o'clock now—I shall take very carefully to Charlotte, I mean Mrs. Percie."

Alicia looked at him, and their good-nights were exchanged.

The morning brought a small parcel from Alicia, and Roland lost no time in opening it: it contained a note to Charlotte, written in the most affectionate terms, and praising their mutual acquaintance Captain Percival.—With the note was a baby's robe, of beautiful texture and workmanship, and a very diminutive

tive baby's cap, adorned with various little bows.

Roland folded them up thinking they were very pretty—and he longed, just for an hour, to be with Charlotte and tell her all he had seen and heard since they parted.

CHAPTER XVII.

“BEHOLD our beautiful old town of W——,” exclaimed the elder O’Neill, as the mail coach which had conveyed the tourists from Cork came within sight of it.

The evening was darkening quickly when the travellers descended from the coach, and after a few minutes’ walk found themselves at the hall door, of the O’Neill’s residence, where they were to spend two days. It was a handsome and comfortable villa, immediately

adjoining the town : they received a most Irish welcome from the young men's father, a fine old gentleman, who had served many years in the Irish brigade ; he was a widower, but his eldest child, a daughter, had been many years mistress of his house, and did the honours of it with ease and lively grace.

Jane O'Neill, some years the senior of her brothers, was in the fulfilment of her various duties, a proof that single ladies can make themselves very useful. Her aged father was spared every annoyance or trouble, by her affectionate exertions. Her brothers, on every occasion, consulted Jane ; she was a sort of oracle among her friends, and Jenny O'Neill, as she was generally called, was never known to have done a foolish act, nor to have caused a moment's uneasiness, among her numerous acquaintances ; she was tolerably well looking, cheerful and invincibly good humoured, and in her sphere of usefulness, very happy. She sat at her tea table and dispensed her smiles

as freely as her refreshing beverage; by her side sat Jervis, bent on "doing the agreeable," as he expressed it, or in plain terms amusing himself. Miss Jenny very soon discovered his character, for she possessed no ordinary share of talent, and she played him off so dexterously and yet so merrily, that she amused those around her.

The evening passed cheerfully, and Roland, on retiring to his room, seeing the comforts and order so seldom seen in a bachelor's house, was fain to admit, women were useful as well as ornamental.

Next morning the whole party met at a rather early hour, round the breakfast table.

"Can you tell me, Miss O'Neill," asked Roland, who was seated near her, "how far it is from W—— to Coomcarne Park?"

"It is nearly two miles, Captain Percie," replied she.

"You will not go there to-day, surely,

Percie," exclaimed Thomas O'Neill; "our yacht is moored off the quay, and we mean to have a sail in it, and a dinner on board—you will come with us?"

"I'm a very indifferent sailor," said Roland, "so I shall content myself with hearing of your sailing. I always prefer terra firma to the treacherous sea; besides I am anxious to visit Coomcarne park."

"The family are not there at present, Captain Percie," observed Jane O'Neill; Mr. and Mrs. O'Carroll are in Cork."

"But the children—the little girls—are they not at home?" enquired Roland.

"Oh, yes," answered Miss O'Neill, "Mary and Camilla, and their governess are there—though poor Miss Malden is confined to her room with a cold."

"My little plan will do wonderfully" thought Roland, "I can easily impose on the children, and have some amusement."

After breakfast the party separated, Miss

O'Neill first requesting Roland would return to dine with her; she was not to be of the sailing party, so he promised, and seeing the young men fairly launched on the deep, he took his way to a hair dresser's shop, here he purchased a dark wig, and at an optician's, a pair of green spectacles, and with these in his pocket he set off for Coomcarne Park; before he arrived at the entrance gate, he stopped, and putting back his own fair hair, he settled on the wig, and then the spectacles, and certainly, it being more than two years since he met the little O'Carrolls, he need not have feared their recognition. He entered the avenue; he walked slowly through the grounds, admiring the varied tints of the woods showing clearly through the sun-shine of that brilliant September day; he paused as he came close to the lake, and he sauntered round its edge to the summer house mentioned before in this tale—seated in it, were Mary and Camilla very pleasantly engaged

discussing the merits of a basket of fruit; he heard their merry young voices as he approached, he listened and one exclaimed :

“Papa is to bring me a very, *very* large wax doll—oh, so high—and Mamma promised me several yards of blue tabinet, and——”

“Indeed Cammie,” said the second little girl, “you are too big now for dolls; remember you are ten years’ old, indeed, nearly eleven.”

“Well, Mary, but you know dear Mamma likes me to have dolls, and Lotta used to play with them, and dress them for us, after she came from school.”

“That was to please us I am sure,” said Mary; “I am to get some cashmere, from Cork, and I intend to make such a beautiful dress for our little nephew, and I would recommend you to make another of the blue tabinet, Mamma is to give you, and not throw it away upon dolls.”

"Well, that is what I will do," said Cammie

Here Roland showed himself—"I beg pardon, young ladies," said he, speaking in a changed voice, "I am an acquaintance of both your father and mother, and I wish to make some enquiries for them."

"Papa and mamma are away from home, sir," said Mary, "they are both very well."

"How unfortunate!" exclaimed Roland. "I am so tired and hungry."

"Perhaps you would like to come to the house, and have some luncheon, sir," said Camilla.

"I should very much indeed," replied Roland, "I have walked from W——."

"We will show you the way, sir, with pleasure," said Camilla.

Before they reached the house, Roland and his young companions were the best possible friends—they never recognised him, and Mary he would scarcely have known, such an im-

provement had taken place in her appearance during the time that had passed since he saw her.—Cammie was little changed—the same bright-looking little thing, mirth shining in her deep black eyes, and health blooming on her dimpled cheeks.

A very nice luncheon was soon produced, and the little girls played their parts most admirably, whilst Roland did justice to the good cheer.

“I once knew your sister, Miss O’Carroll,” said he, “where is she now?”

Mary did not answer, but blushed deeply.

“Camilla did—“she is married, sir, to a Mr. Percie.”

“Have you seen her lately?” asked he.

“No, sir,” replied Cammie, “we have not seen her since her marriage.”

“Why so, my little girl,” enquired Roland, he saw Mary shake her head at Camilla, which she did not mind, for she loved prattling.

"Charlotte married without leave, sir," said Cammie, "she eloped."

"And would not you like to see her," asked Roland.

"Oh! extremely," exclaimed both the children, "Charlotte was so fond of us."

"And she has a nice little boy now," said Cammie, "and that makes me an aunt you know, I do not know what his name is."

"I suppose it is Roland," said Mary.

"I know your sister's husband very well indeed," said Roland.

"We know him too," said Mary.

"I thought you knew nothing of Lotta's marriage, sir," observed Camilla, "you enquired where she was."

"Knowing of her marriage, would not tell me where she resided, would it my little inquisitor?" said Roland.

"And another Miss O'Carroll will be soon married, sir, I can tell you," exclaimed Camilla, "Miss Mary has a husband ready—he

was here last year, he writes to us ;” but seeing Mary’s bashful look, Cammie ran up to her and whispering something, made her smile.

“You have no need to tell me the name, I know it,” said Roland, and he wished Mary good bye, as Lady Adrian Wilson and returned to W——, to Miss O’Neill’s cheerful company, comparing Charlotte’s present lot with the enviable one, she had left for him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROLAND's leave of absence had just expired, and very joyfully his young wife welcomed the day that was to bring him home; she arose early that morning, and how beautifully arranged their rooms were, she had bought, with her own money it was, some geraniums, and she thought they quite improved the look of the sitting room; she dressed herself with such care, how thin she had become! but how little she cared for that; there was her beauti-

ful boy so fat and healthy—surely never before was seen such a baby, in his best cap and frock—Charlotte had arranged a little bed for him on the sofa—the cradle was removed in honor of Roland's return, and she could not bear to have him out of her sight, and she would not leave the front room, which commanded a view of the barrack square; from the windows to the sofa the young mother walked incessantly, now she would kneel by the infant and speak to him of his "own darling papa," and then she would go to the window, hoping to see him appear.—"If I were away, and Roland came in, would he know our baby I wonder," thought Charlotte, "and would he admire him."

Ellen broke the thread of her cogitations by abruptly entering—"I think, ma'am, the master must be come, for I see young Mr. Jervis below, talking to his father."

Charlotte flew to the window, and just then

Roland entered the yard, and meeting two officers, stopped for some time walking up and down with them, and conversing, evidently in high spirits—she shrank back—poor thing—after so long an absence—at least to her it had appeared long, to feel so careless about seeing her—she felt herself tremble—did he then really care so little for her? a tear started to her eye—she sent Ellen away, and by her baby's side she sat, every instant expecting her husband's appearance, but for nearly an hour he remained away. Jervis had joined the group, and he told of their travels so pleasantly Roland could not leave him—he certainly looked more than once at the windows of his quarters, but he saw no one there.

Charlotte heard his step on the stairs, she knew it well, and with a palpitating heart she advanced towards the door and threw her arms round his neck, and he did kiss her with something for the first time like love.

"Look at our son, dearest Roland," said Charlotte, "is he not a lovely boy?—so like you he is when he opens his eyes and smiles."

That evening passed happily to Charlotte—Roland exerted himself to be agreeable; the tourists came to the tea table of one, they all admired as much as they did Charlotte, with great pleasure—she had prepared a little supper for them, and most cheerfully the night wore on.

"I have but one complaint to allege against your husband, Mrs. Percie," said Jervis, gaily, "and that one is, that on a grand ball-night, in the fair city of Cork, he passed himself off as a bachelor—flirted most assiduously with one unfortunate creature. Make him tell you all he said to her."

"I'll do that willingly, Jervis," exclaimed Roland, with a good humour that quite astonished Charlotte.—"I was introduced to your

friend, Miss Masterton, Charlotte, and I did, as Jervis relates, pay her most marked attention. She knew me as Captain Percival, and moreover, to prove what a good opinion this fair lady had of me, she entrusted me with a parcel for this same Mrs. Percie ;—so, Jervis, what can you say ?”

“ That you are a happy fellow—that is all,” said Jervis, bowing low to Charlotte.

The party separated at a late hour.

For some days Roland’s attention to Charlotte and his son, made the former very happy, but soon his love of pleasure overcame this domestic turn, and the gaities of Dublin had more charms for him than the smiles of either wife or child. The winter had set in, and the metropolis was in its gay season, and none enjoyed the pleasures of it more than Roland Percie. Charlotte seldom went out, she was so much engaged with her boy, who well rewarded her trouble, for he grew daily in

strength and beauty. One night, by her husband's desire, she accepted the invitation of a widow lady, who was famous for supper parties, and who had frequently asked both of them to her house. Charlotte dressed herself with care, but without ornaments, and Roland, remarking this, said:

"Come, Lotta, you must wear some ornament—you look too girlish in that simple style."

Charlotte went into her room and took out her gold chain, her father's gift, and with this, and Roland's only gift to her, a small diamond brooch, she returned to her husband.

"Why don't you wear the pearls, Lotta," said he, "they become you so much."

"Oh, these will do, dear Roland," said she, gaily—come, we shall be late at Mrs. O'Meagher's, and I hear she is very particular."

"No," said Roland, "you must put on the pearls—I *desire* you."

She hesitated.

"What are you about?" asked he angrily—"don't keep me waiting longer. You ladies, with your dress, are a great plague to one;—how happy I was without a wife dragging to a party this way."

"I would rather remain at home, dear Roland," said she, gently.

"But you shan't remain at home, madam," replied he; "can't you bear so much to be said to you without falling into the pouts?—A pretty life is in store for me with you. For your own sake I suggest a change of dress, and you fly off in this manner—you'll stay at home, indeed—a pattern mother; caring for nothing but your infant. Very little would make me pack him off to the country, to be nursed."

Had he noticed Charlotte's cheek, he would have seen its ghastly hue.

"Roland," said she—and a slight tremor dis-

turbed her voice—"I would willingly change my dress twenty times to please you, and I should feel grateful for your caring about my looks."

"Grateful nonsense—pish," said Roland.

"I cannot wear the pearls—I have not them."

Roland was standing near the fire-place, with his back *à l'Anglaise* to the fire, and nearly opposite to him stood Charlotte—The only light in the room was from the bed-room candle, which Charlotte had placed on a table near her.

"And where are they, madam? may I enquire," asked Roland, in a cold voice.

"I sold them," said Charlotte, faintly, "to pay—"

"Sold them," exclaimed Roland, vehemently—"sold the only things of value you had—without my leave—there is no bearing with you—and he aimed a blow at his gentle, young

wife—it struck her on the fair white shoulder, and the force of it sent the chain round her neck deep into the tender flesh.

She did not scream, nor did she rush from the room—she knew her maid was in the next room—she reeled beneath the blow—but painful as it was to her bodily feeling, what was it in comparison to that inflicted on her affection.—She moaned lowly, and some stifled sobs escaped her—she sank on a chair, and covering her face with her hands, felt, for the time, as if her heart would break.

“Sold them,” again almost screamed Roland—his anger seeming to increase from the very idea he was obliged to admit the justness of, that he had hurt his poor young wife—“sold them to gratify your extravagance—to buy such as these—and he strode over towards the geranium stand, and he deliberately broke the stems of all his wife’s plants—plants she

had bought for his sake, and tearing off branch after branch, he threw the whole into the fire. "I'll teach you, madam, to restrain your fancies," he advanced towards her—"I'll teach you that you must *obey* me—or I'll *divorce* you."

Charlotte shrunk back on her chair.

"Where and when did you dare to sell these pearls?" asked Roland, in a voice husky from anger.

Charlotte, in as brief terms as she could, told her tale. What an effort it required to send back the tears—to suppress the groans that she felt it would have been a relief to give utterance to—she took her hands from her face—of as ashy whiteness as a corpse it was—the very lips were livid, and the fair shoulder, could she look round on it was already swollen, and marked, and pained her especially—but she succeeded—she told of the bill from the London shopkeeper—and of

her disposal of the pearls—she did not say who had been the purchaser—nor did she try to show how well she had loved even his good name, when she parted with what was so dear.

Roland heard her in silence, and then he left the room.

Charlotte, when she thought he was gone, threw herself on her knees and wept plentifully.

Roland heard her, and he returned—"Mrs. Percie," said he, coldly, "I shall be with you in half an hour, and you must then come to Mrs. O'Meagher's party," and he slapped the door after him, and poor Charlotte was alone.

For nearly a quarter of an hour she gave way unrestrainedly to her tears, she thought it was her only chance of gaining composure—and when Roland returned she was waiting for him—a scarf thrown over her beautiful

neck and shoulders; she rose and followed him to the carriage that took them to a scene not at all in harmony with her feelings.

CHAPTER XIX.

"REMEMBER, madam, I expect you will make no scene here with faintings or nonsense," said Roland to Charlotte, as they ascended the stairs, at Mrs. O'Meagher's. "You must play and sing, and do every thing you are asked."

They entered the drawing-room, it was not more than half full, and those that were there seemed enjoying themselves highly. The room was brilliantly lighted, and poor Charlotte's

extreme paleness afforded a strong contrast to the gaiety of the scene. Could the feelings of those we see around us in similar scenes, be all known, how much anguish would oftentimes be discovered under the semblance of cheerfulness and enjoyment.

"I feared you would not come, Mrs. Percie," said Mrs. O'Meagher, advancing towards Charlotte—"it is so late."

"We had no idea of losing your pleasant party, Mrs. O'Meagher," replied Roland, "but we were unavoidably detained."

"Not by illness I hope," said she, glancing at Charlotte's extremely pale face.

"Oh, no, no—business," hurriedly exclaimed Roland, and he led his wife to a seat, and their hostess joining her, he sauntered off, and poor Charlotte felt under a kind of bewilderment; her husband, her dearly loved Roland, had struck her—she who, during her whole childhood, could never remember having got even a gentle slap, as a chastisement, and

now a wife and mother, to get a blow from one she had left so much for ; but he surely did not mean to hurt her.

“Do you play cards, Mrs. Percie ?” asked Mrs. O’Meagher, wishing to find some occupation for so silent a lady, and one so seemingly dead to all enjoyment.

Charlotte started from her reverie, and replied in the affirmative ; she thought she had asked her if she played the piano.

“Are they a favourite pastime of yours ?” enquired her hostess.

“Very much so,” answered Charlotte.

“Perhaps you would come into the next room, and join the players, it may amuse you,” said Mrs. O’Meagher.

“If you wish, I shall be very happy,” said Charlotte, and she followed her to the next room—it was inside the drawing room—a small apartment, comfortably fitted up, not with musical instruments as Charlotte had thought, but with all other furniture neces-

sary for a sitting room; around it were three card tables, two were occupied, the other empty; one near the door was crowded with persons evidently enjoying, very heartily, the then fashionable game of "Pope Joan;" at the other were four persons playing whist, two ladies and a gentleman who looked towards her as she entered, the other gentleman sat with his back towards the door.

"Do join us, Mrs. O'Meagher," said a lady whist player, "Mr. Grenville acknowledges he is tired of us—we do not play scientifically enough for him."

"If Mr. Grenville leave, I must abscond," said the second gentleman.

The voice made Charlotte start—they were close to the speaker—he turned to address Mrs. O'Meagher, and Charlotte saw her father, her own dear father; she was so near him, she could have touched him: he saw her—plainly saw her, but he bent over his cards. Charlotte, for a minute, was overcome, she

knew not what to do ; to throw herself into her father's arms was her first impulse, but then he might reject her embrace, and Roland's words, on their ascending the stairs, sounded in her ears. She turned slowly from the room ; Mrs. O'Meagher was deep in conversation with Mr. Grenville, on the merits of whist. Charlotte gained the seat she had vacated.

Roland had watched her exit and entrance, and in a minute he was by her side. "What does this mean, madam?" asked he, in a low, angry tone ; "why cannot you remain quietly in one place?"

"Roland," said she very gently, "I am afraid I am getting ill—would you allow me to go home?—my father is in that room."

Roland took her arm, he pressed it rudely, and walked with her from the room : outside the door, in the cool passage he stopped. "Perhaps you'll recover here, Mrs. Percie,"

said he ; “ when I bring you to a party again, you will thank me.”

Some person unclosed the drawing room door ; it was Mr. O’Carroll, he could not remain so near his child and enjoy himself, and he slipped away as soon as he could from his card party.

“ Oh, father ! dearest, dear father ! ” sobbed Charlotte, forgetting Roland’s injunctions ; “ forgive me, I am so very—very——”

“ Never, never,” was Mr. O’Carroll’s only answer ; he strode down the stairs, and was gone.

“ Oh, father ! listen—do come back,” said Charlotte, faintly.

Roland shook her by the arm, roughly.

“ Oh, Roland, I am so ——” said she, and she fainted.

Roland cursed deep and long—they were useless now—he hated such scenes, he therefore took his wife up in his arms, and carried her down stairs into a parlour ; here, by the

aid of two female servants, he succeeded in recovering her, and then he called a carriage, and took her home; not a word of either reproach or affection did he bestow on her that night.

How true it is that when we are the aggressors, we feel a sort of dislike to the aggrieved.

Poor Charlotte's woes were soon forgotten in a deep and dreamless sleep, she never remembered before to have felt so entirely overcome.

Mr. O'Carroll paced his room for many hours that night, ere he retired to rest—the face of his dearest child, so pale and thin, was constantly before him—“If I knew she were happy, how glad I should feel,” thought he—“I cannot forgive her—no, she treated me wickedly—what an example it would be to my other two little girls, if I forgave her—they are growing up—they may treat me in the same way.”

Early next morning, Mr. O'Carroll left Dublin.

Charlotte waited dinner nearly two hours next evening for Roland, but he did not make his appearance—he had eaten his breakfast in silence, and gone out immediately after it, she knew not whither.

Ellen seeing her mistress' anxiety, made enquiries for Roland, and learned he was dining at the mess-table.

For the following fortnight Roland never dined with his wife, and at times she would find herself struggling to receive him with a smile, instead of a sigh, but her love was now too deep rooted for his unkindness to eradicate it; it was a steady enduring love, which like many a beautiful wild plant growing in an uncared for woodland, which a kindly dew first fostered in its growth—grow and thrive all the stronger and more luxuriant from the very neglect—allowing all its beauties to develop themselves—and the storms and the

rains, and the cold, came and went and left the plant blooming more freshly in its native soil—and the trials, and vexations, and chills, Charlotte's love met with, instead of blighting its beauty, added vigor to its strength—showed forth its many hidden perfections—and though nurtured by unkindnesses it did not wither. Another woman's love, like an exotic, would have required care and attentive skill to keep it from dying—but such was not Charlotte's—it was a part of herself, firmly twined round every fibre of her frame, and showing in its vigorous growth, how pure and good was the soil it had taken root in.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Christmas of that year came in with the most violent storms of snow, it was dangerous to traverse the streets of Dublin, and Charlotte, except to attend divine worship, did not leave her quarters, during the Christmas time. Mirth was abroad, and very many invitations, most friendly, and pressing ones, came in on her solitude, but she refused them all—the

bitter night of her last party came before her, and she determined, unless Roland desired her, to abstain from accepting them, and often when she saw him going out, she would wish he would say she should accompany him, but he was too full of his own enjoyment, to care for her's.—Since Mrs. O'Meagher's party, he had rarely dined at home, and his careless coldness gave his poor wife little comfort.

Christmas day dawned, and there is no time of the year more gladdening than Christmas—Christmas—merry, happy Christmas—it brings bright thoughts of home and its joys before us. We feel young in our recollections of the cheerful nights of '*old* Christmas.'

Charlotte's Christmas greeting with her husband was sweetly spoken, and received a cold "thank you," from him.

Their breakfast was a dull meal, she tried to rally her spirits, to be gay when so many

were so, but Roland gave her no encouragement, and her efforts failed her.

On her return from chapel, her husband was out, and had left word he was engaged to dine with some friends, and she took her solitary meal, with what appetite she pleased—there was no attentive husband to press her to eat—no father, nor brother—nor sister—nor friend, to speak kind words—but she had a comfort, in her beautiful baby—and she sat that long evening with him, and she tried, as she watched his little smiles, to fancy herself happy.—She had drawn a low chair near the fire, and in this she sat with her little Roland in her arms. I have often remarked that a fire makes one contemplative—it made our poor heroine so at any rate.

A group of singers in the barrack square, chaunting forth Christmas carols, brought her thoughts to Christmas and all its associations. One oft repeated line of a verse

reached her ears from the songsters outside :

“ Rejoice and be you merry, set sorrow aside.”

She found it impossible to do so. First came to her memory, the blithesome days of childhood, when Christmas with its holidays, its presents, and its varied amusements, made such a happy time, then the merry school days, when the previous restraint made the holiday freedom doubly relished—their school-girl attempts at theatricals—the pleasure of the applause their efforts gained them—their tricks and jokes with each other, and the good humour and harmony of all.—Then her first Christmas as a girl—what a happy one it was at Marthorpe Vicarage.

Ah ! little did she then think Roland, who seemed to value so much her young affections would so soon have become careless about

them—how blissful were her feelings of enjoyment during that Christmas—since then, three returns of the festive season had come round, bringing with them the inevitable changes of life—she was now a mother—and when the year revolved again what changes might appear—she shuddered—tears slowly trickled down her cheeks; for a long time she continued gazing on the blazing fire, but imperceptibly her head reeled against the back of the chair, an old fashioned high backed chair it was—and she fell asleep. What a beautiful picture that young mother and child would have made in that position—Charlotte's hair had escaped from its confinement and hung about her shoulders—her face was pale, and the long dark lashes and beautiful brows showed clearly on the almost transparent skin—one arm supported the head of her baby, and the other was round him.

In one of the gayest houses in the metropo-

lis, on that night, were assembled a large and merry party of the youth, beauty, and fashion of Dublin, and gayest amid the gay throng was the very handsome and very gay Roland Percie. Did he think of his wife?—he comforted himself by saying, she preferred being at home, and he enjoyed himself, nor cared for the devoted one whose best days his carelessness was poisoning.

“Well, Percie,” exclaimed Jervis, coming up to him, “allow this is a brilliant assemblage. Why, if we had some of the old orthodox Christmas revelries, kissing under the mistletoe, and all that sort of thing, it would be complete. Why did you not make Mrs. Percie come?”

“She prefers remaining at home,” replied Roland, quickly; “women, I assure you, like their own way, and I give her to enjoy her’s.”

“If she were my wife,” thought Jervis, “I would make her come.”

“Jervis, my dear fellow, I congratulate you

from my heart," said Reginald Willoughby, *ex passant* to join the dancers.

"I know of no particular cause of congratulation I am blessed with," exclaimed Jervis.

"Did you not see the last arrival, aye, Piers?" asked Willoughby.

"No,—who was it?" enquired Jervis.

"A graceful, fair-haired nymph, who remembers a ball in Cork, I am sure," said Willoughby.

"What is it Jervis's *Dulcinea*, whom he so unkindly flirted with in Cork, and never heeded broken hearts nor broken vows?" asked Roland, gaily. "The poor girl, I dare say, remembers him."

"Are you serious, Reginald?" enquired Jervis; "did you see Miss Atterbury here to-night? Her presence would indeed make the scene complete."

Roland observed Willoughby's partner smile, and he said:

"Why Piers, you are a most unthinking fellow; it is very dangerous to mention a lady's name. How do you know but her brother might overhear your observations, and ask you what your intentions are; and in this country, so brave are all the young men, they would think nothing of fighting six duels with you, until their honor was satisfied."

"And," said Willoughby, gaily, "like Sir Lucius O'Trigger, they would ask you 'if an unlucky bullet should carry a *quietus* with it,' would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey? I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey—is there not, Miss Coke?" asked he of his partner, "you are a Dublin lady, and should know."

"I would recommend your friend to choose a 'snug lying,' in St. Andrew's cemetery," replied Miss Coke, evidently greatly amused.

"My intentions, I assure you, are all on the side of peace," said Jervis. "The lady amused me, She was pretty, gay, and young, and I endeavoured to amuse her; but my brother officers were jealous of my success—this is the reason of their unkind remarks. I must go now and seek my 'Eloisa,'" and Jervis went off gaily.

"Her name is not Louisa—it is Constantia," said Miss Coke, to Willoughby, not understanding the allusion.

He could not restrain a smile, as he asked, "do you know Miss Atterbury?"

"She is *only* my half-sister," replied Miss Coke, and Roland and Willoughby enjoyed the joke highly.

Jervis was well quizzed by them both.

"And has she brothers?" asked Roland.

"Seven of them, Captain Percie," answered Miss Coke; "but all too juvenile to excite your friend's fears,"

Very gaily the night wore on. At a late

hour supper was announced, and it did honor to the Christmas times.

Jervis sat by his lady-love. She was young and romantic enough—had read dozens of novels, and she believed all he whispered her so sweetly was true. She had often dwelt with delight on their first acquaintance, and had pined to meet him again, and with undisguised delight received his attentions. She was an artless, affectionate creature—unsophisticated in the world's ways, and she yielded up her guileless heart to a heartless man—at least heartless in his flirtations with her. He escorted her home that night, and left her to dream of his supposed attachment.

Roland came to his quarters more than half inebriated, from the repeated potations of Champagne he had indulged in.

During the Christmas time parties followed each other every night. On the last night of the year a public ball was given, and to this

Roland desired Charlotte to come, so many, he told her, had enquired why she absented herself that he was tired of answering their enquiries.

Could he not have affected a little anxiety to see her amused? How much it would have added to her enjoyment. She went, however, and tried her very best to appear as gay as those around her, and much admiration she excited.

Time wore slowly on, and their regiment, then more than a year in Dublin, were ordered to a small county town; this was a change Roland could not bring himself to submit to, and by a little exertion, he effected his exchange from that regiment into one then quartered in Brighton.

And did Charlotte care for herself?—no: but she was glad at the change for her beautiful boy; the fresh sea breezes would do him good, for he was rather delicate; and too, Brighton and its gaieties had charms for her

idolized husband. How did he repay her devotion ! by a neglect that made her feel, in full force, her undutiful conduct towards her parents. Poor Charlotte ! you fulfilled well all your duties of wife and mother. It was sad your young days should have so soon been embittered.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE Autumn of the year was on the decline, and Winter was approaching with a bleak and barren aspect; little Roland's health, which was occasionally delicate, gave his fond mother some uneasiness.

The Christmas came, and Roland went to his home for a few days, and Charlotte fearing to travel so far with her baby, remained at the barracks. A cold, comfortless Christmas it was, and a mothers' love alone made her en-

dure it; but it passed slowly, and the new year opened; she spent the day in watching by the little bed of her boy, who was feverish and cross, cutting his first tooth; he slept tranquilly during the night, but his mother often rose from her bed, to watch his slumbers.

Next day, a bright sunshiny day, she took him out for a short walk, and on returning found a letter for [her—it was from her friend, Alicia Masterton; she broke the seal—a black one it was—with a fearful foreboding of evil and misery: she turned deadly pale, and Ellen snatched little Roland from her lap, as she fell with a stunning force on the ground.—No sound escaped her lips.

Ellen ran, with the child in her arms, and called for assistance.

The doctor of the regiment instantly came, and said she must have received some violent shock, he made Ellen read the letter, and there was an account of Henry's death,—he had

been delicate for some time, and a fever cut him off in a few days, in the prime of youth and beauty, at the university.

Charlotte was carried to bed, and lay for hours apparently senseless, and all efforts were vain to rouse her.

When Ellen hearing the doctor express a wish that something should be done, to make her cry, proposed that music should be tried, "that I am sure," said the faithful creature, sobbing, "will make my dear mistress cry if any thing does, for poor dear Master Henry dearly loved music," and she was right.

Charlotte was roused by hearing sounds she loved so well, and she remembered her loss, and wept, and wept again. For days she continued in a state bordering on insanity.

Where was Roland, who should have been near her at this grievous trial? from Marthorpe, he went to a race meeting, and there he

was enjoying himself, quite unconscious, certainly, of his poor wife's grief.

Poor Charlotte! she had no dear friend near, to console her, and her lamentations were doubly bitter, by the remembrance of her dear parents' grief, and she away from them, unable to comfort them. Oh!" exclaimed she, in the truest anguish, "it is the best are taken from this earth. There is Henry, our own loved Henry—so many loving him, and he so full of life—there he is taken away from the earth he gladdened so many hearts on.—There he is snatched off with his talents and his amiability—all now rotting in the tomb, and here am I left—I who so deeply offended those parents—he never cost a tear to—— that their first tear for him, should be so sadly called forth. Why was I not taken? no tears would be shed for me.—I could be spared—my boy is too young to miss me. Oh, Henry! Henry! my beloved brother, are our walks all over—our hopes for

the future all decayed? Oh! little did I think our quiet ramble, in the moonlight, before you went, would have been our last.—And my last letter was unanswered, and never, never shall I hear from you more. Oh, 'tis well there is left me a blessed hope of immortality, or I should die," and she threw herself on her knees, and prayed to the Almighty Disposer of all events, to enable her to bear her affliction.

Who but a sister, a loving and attached sister, can tell a sister's grief, in mourning the death of a beloved brother? None assuredly—and as months rolled on, Charlotte still grieved, yes, deeply and truly grieved the premature death of the loved one. Her's was the quiet grief, the most profound, which vents itself not in words or loud wailing—she wept apparently unnoticed, though her husband sometimes remarked her altered looks, and noiseless attentions. Before him she preserved a seeming tranquillity, but her once forced gaiety was all gone, she

attended as regularly to her various duties as before—though the hope for the future had fled—in the death of her beloved Henry she seemed to lose all interest for the time to come.

Roland was seldom absent from parties of pleasure, but his return home was always gladly welcomed, and in truth never was a fonder, nor a more devoted wife than Charlotte.

The following summer they passed a month at Marthorpe vicarage, and, here she felt an additional degree of sadness, for every thing reminded her of Henry; her mother-in-law saw at a glance that she was not happy, and assisted by Mr. Percie, tried to make her so as far as they could, and she felt grateful for their kindness.

Barton was there in the gayest spirits, he was going to be married to an elderly and very rich heiress, and Charlotte sighed to think how easily he had ceased to lament Emma Leslie; she forgot that three years had passed since her

death, and in this world of change, how long three years seem.

Two more years passed on, and Bath was their destination for a time.

Roland was growing every day more careless.

Five years experience of wedded life had Charlotte now had, and frequently as she compared it to that of her parents she would sigh and weep in acknowledging she merited her punishment.

Her son now prattling was her joy—she loved him with a double fervency of a mother's love, and she would remain gazing on his lovely countenance so like what his father had first appeared to her, until she would fancy herself happy.

Morning concerts were then, as they are now, greatly the fashion in Bath, and Roland coming home late one night, and finding Charlotte awaiting his arrival with a little supper

prepared to welcome him, he felt a return of his old love, and made her promise to go with him to a concert next day.

Charlotte was happy in any proof of his affection, she gladly accepted the proposal, and rose next morning with a feeling of pleasure, to which she had long been a stranger.

Ellen, in dressing her mistress in her elegant and expensive walking dress, which was a present from Mr. Percie, thought she had never seen her look handsomer.

Charlotte really did look lovely—she was thin, certainly, but her complexion was fair, almost transparent, with a slight tinge of colour, and her eyes were bright and beautiful.

Roland remarked her beauty, and felt proud of his wife, on entering the concert room, it was crowded, and she felt very timid at the admiration she excited.

The concert had commenced, and the first

part finished, when she remarked a young lady looking very intently at her, whose face she thought she recognised; seated near the lady was a gentleman, who when spoken to, turned round and saluted Charlotte in a friendly manner,—it was Lord Archgolle; she blushed deeply in returning his bow, for she thought of their *last* meeting; he advanced towards her with the lady on his arm, and reaching out his hand to Charlotte, spoke to her with such an unembarrassed manner as put her quite at her ease; he spoke too, to Roland, and then turning to Charlotte said:

“Will you allow me, Mrs. Percie, to present Lady Archgolle to you, she claims old acquaintance with you.”

“Do you forget your former school-fellow, Josephine Mac Donnell?” asked Lady Archgolle, taking [Charlotte’s hand very affectionately.

“I did,” replied Charlotte, smiling, “but I am very glad, I assure you, of this opportunity

of renewing ourselves in each other's recollections."

Lady Archgolle seated herself near Charlotte, and they conversed together for some time.

"Remember, I may claim you now as a cousin, Mrs. Percie," said Lord Archgolle, gaily, "and how thrives my young cousin, Roland?"

She thanked him gracefully, the concert ended, and all parted.

Lord and Lady Archgolle promised to visit them next day.

"Charlotte," said her husband, when they reached a street leading to the barracks, "I must leave you here, for I promised young Merton to be with him, at this hour, to choose a horse; you cannot mind going such a short distance alone, for you walk off daily the Lord only knows where, with the child."

"I do not, indeed, Roland," replied she, and they parted, she thinking there was a

time when he would have preferred a walk with her, to any pleasure. She proceeded quickly, when the voice of an Irish beggar woman arrested her steps ; she knew the face of the speaker, it was that of a former servant, at Coomcarne Park, who did not, however, recognize her.

“ The poor woman told a piteous tale of woe, and with that pathos that an Irish beggar possesses. She had left, she said, the best place on the face of the earth, to marry a soldier. “ I followed him, madam,” said she, “ through sickness and poverty, and last month he left me with five orphans, starving ; and besides, I have my old mother to support, for sure I’d not leave her after me.”

“ Where is your husband gone ?” asked Charlotte.

“ To foreign parts, madam,” answered she ; “ I think ’tis either to Amerikay or the Indies—but sure he’d not let me know, for fear I’d follow him, and indeed I won’t trouble him

any more.—All I want now is enough to carry me back to old Ireland, where I'd have pace and plenty, for indeed my dear mistress, Mrs. O'Carroll, may the Heavens shield her, she won't not let me be in want. I too, madam, have a brother, a strong farmer, nigh unto Coomcarne Park, who would give me board and lodging for the asking, and glad to have me."

"Where do you stay, now?" enquired Charlotte.

"Oh! then please your ladyship's honour, in a garret of a room, in the next street."

"I do not doubt your story," said Charlotte, "but I wish to see your children," and she followed the poor woman; they came to the door of a large but old looking house, and ascended three flights of crazy stairs, and stopped at a room door, at the very top of the house: an old woman, with a baby in her arms, opened the door, and within were four

more children, dirty looking and very thin—they stood mute when they saw Charlotte.

“You had best not come in, lady,” said the old woman, feebly, “for sure enough little Ned is in the small pox.”

Charlotte shuddered, and hastily descending the stairs, she gave the woman all the money she had, which was only some shillings. “I will send you enough to take you to Ireland, to-morrow,” said Charlotte, as she took the number of the house, and with many blessings, walked off towards the barracks. It had begun raining heavily, and Charlotte hoping it would soon be over, and not liking to get her new dress all wet, went into a shop and sat down; she was there sometime, and longing to have some money to buy a toy for little Roland, for it was a toy shop, when Roland entered, leaning on Mr. Merton; he looked displeased at Charlotte, and coming up to her, said in a low, angry tone:

"What brings you here? I have not money to give you to throw away upon trifles for a child."

"I came in from the rain, Roland," answered she, mildly; "I am not buying any thing."

"This was not the street I left you in, madam, so come away, now,—the rain does not signify," and he drew Charlotte's arm within his, and hurried her off in very heavy rain.

Her new dress was all destroyed,—all spattered and wet.

"What a fool I was," said Roland, angrily, "to bring you out at all—catch me doing so again—there is your dress all ruined, and where will you get another, I suppose too you will catch cold from this wetting."

"Just then turning a street Lord and Lady Archgolle passed them, in a beautiful carriage drawn by four grey horses.

Charlotte gave a gentle sigh.

"I dare say you are confoundedly sorry you did not marry Lord Archgolle," said he, in a sneering tone: "you would then have had dresses enough, and money to gratify all your extravagant fancies. I know I am sorry you did not."

Poor Charlotte was glad when she reached her room, to give vent to her tears. She knew something must have annoyed Roland, and she bore his reproaches without a complaint—with that patience that all good wives should bear their husband's caprices of temper. He had really been annoyed, for he had lost a large wager, and was unable to buy a horse he had longed for, for a richer purchaser outbid him, and his wife had to bear all the effects of his bad temper.

That evening Roland was, as usual, out at some party, and Charlotte sent Ellen with her gold chain, her dear father's gift to her the Christmas she spent at Marthorpe Vicarage, to sell it.

When Charlotte received the money, she said to Ellen—

“How little my dear father thought this was the use I should make of his gifts.”

She sent it next day by Ellen, to the soldier's wife, desiring her, however, not to let herself be known, or her mistress either, and she felt a glow of happiness for her unostentatious charity.

CHAPTER XXII.

For days Roland vented his ill humour on his unhappy wife, and she bore all without a murmur. Lord and Lady Archgolle had left Bath in haste, for Ireland, where Lady Archgolle's mother resided, who was dying, and they both wrote notes of apology and regrets to Charlotte, for not being able to visit her. At the end of a week from the concert, Roland obtained a leave of absence, and went to London to attend some grand fancy balls, and on busi-

ness, as he said ; and, before his return, his poor wife was in almost a hopeless state, from the ravages of the small-pox. She found herself very ill one morning, and sent immediately for a doctor, for she dreaded the disease which in reality had seized her ; she wisely hired a careful nurse for her boy, and sent him into the country ; she wrote a few lines to Roland, entreating he would watch over their child—and there she lay on her sick bed, with none to care for her, save her faithful attendant. The fever raged ; and for days her life hung on a mere thread. She wildly raved of youth, and home—of Roland and Henry—of her parents ; and poor Ellen would sit by her bedside, weeping, listening to her incoherent ravings. From this wild delirium she sank into a death-like stupor, and the doctor left her, saying, he had no hopes. But life came slowly back, and youth triumphed ; and, at the end of two months, the doctor ordered her to change the air ; but that she would not do without her

husband's approval. As all infection, he said, was past, she sent for her boy.

So improved as he appeared, "Are you my own dear mamma, or another mamma?" lispingly enquired little Roland, when brought to her.

"I am your own dear mamma, my darling child," replied his mother, folding him in her arms.

"Oh! now I know you again, when you speak,—but your face is changed, dear mamma."

"I have been very sick, my love," said his mother, feebly.

"Then I will be a quiet and a good boy, dear mamma, my own dear mamma," replied Roland, and he sat down by her side on a little stool.

And where was he who ought to have attended her that loved him so well. He had obtained additional leave of absence, and spent the time of his wife's illness in a roving life;

yet sometimes a pang of remorse would assail his conscience, for his treatment of her, and would satisfy himself with the thought, that he ought not to put himself in the way of infection. He wrote occasionally to enquire for her, and when he received a few lines from herself, he had just enough heart left to feel glad. He joined his regiment, and entered his quarters, Ellen met him on the stairs with his lovely boy in her arms ; he took the child from her and kissed him, but his kiss was coldly received, he went into their sitting room, and Ellen followed him, to say that her mistress, being still very weak, was lying on the bed ; to her Roland went, and how felt he when he saw the withered creature before him ? He coldly kissed her, and poor Charlotte felt it.

“ He never really loved me,” thought she—
“ why should he now ?” and tears, despite her, trickled down her cheeks.

Where was all that beauty gone Roland had

once so much admired. The bright, black eyes looked red—the ebony hair was all closely cut, and the perfect features and the smooth, clear skin, were swollen and disfigured.

“ I am still weak, very weak, dear Roland,” said she, feebly extending her emaciated hand towards him. The doctor ordered the change of air, so, if you can afford it, I should like to go with my boy to some cheap watering place, until I regain my strength.”

It was just what he wished, and she removed the next week to a retired village on the sea side. Roland rarely visited her, and when he did, his carelessness showed no token of love. And where was poor Charlotte’s happiness!—weak in health, but for the endearments of her lovely boy, she would have sunk under her troubles. He cared not for any sport that his mother did not tell him of, and it seemed as if, having but one parent to love, he loved her with a double intensity of affection ; he was a very lively child, and he cheer-

ed his mother's hours, and she often blessed Providence that had given her such a blessing.

Three months rolled by, and Charlotte found her health improve, her face, too, had become more like what it had been, yet still much marked, and she determined during Roland's next visit, to question him about her future plans. He came not for some time, for his regiment had again changed their quarters, and Charlotte waited weeks upon weeks without a visit. At length he came, but appeared fluttered and uneasy, and in going away said, in reply to Charlotte's queries—

“You had better remain here for a month longer, at least. Before that is passed I will see you again. I have some idea of exchanging into the —— regiment, which is ordered on foreign service. I am heartily tired of an English life.”

He came again with wonderful punctuality, and Charlotte delightedly welcomed him, but

he was cold, almost repulsive in his manner.— They were seated in the small sitting room, and Charlotte called to Ellen for some refreshments, she quickly brought them in ; Roland took the decanter of wine, and pouring out nearly a tumbler full he drank it off.

“Send that child away,” said he, hastily.

Charlotte took little Roland by the hand, and with a gentle caress gave him to Ellen’s care, and as she did so, tears dimmed her eye, for she saw the bright blue eyes of her boy glistening with them—he was unaccustomed to the voice of reproof.

“Shut the door now, Charlotte,” said Roland, in a low determined voice, “and listen to me without making any comment.”

She felt herself tremble, as she sat down.

Roland seated himself near her—both were silent for sometime, he broke the silence—saying in a husky voice, and slowly—“I need not remind you of our ill-starred marriage—Fool

that I was then, but I have paid dearly for it."

Something like remorse caused him to pause—for he remembered the unceasing devotion of the wife he had once so fondly loved.

Charlotte had her hands tightly clasped on her bosom, trying to suppress the bitter tears that were forcing themselves down her cheeks.

Roland did not look at her—he continued after a short pause, in a more determined voice—"My father and mother have received intelligence, that I am not the loving husband—the fool about you—I was in the days of youthful passion—that I did not attend you in your sickness—that I love pleasure better than I love you. A letter of remonstrance and bitter reproof they have sent me, and you are the cause of this, madam," added he, fiercely.

Charlotte looked up at him with a look of sorrowful wonder.

"Why look so," asked he, vehemently, "can you say with truth that you have not tried to gain my parents' pity—to move them to love you at their son's expense?"

"A just God," replied Charlotte, convulsively, falling on her knees, and burying her face in her hands, "knows I would sooner die—in the most cruel torments, than wrong you in thought, or word, or deed—No—no—to no one living have I even given reason to think you were not a kind husband," she sobbed violently, and the tears trickled through her fingers.

"A kind husband," said Roland, sneeringly, and in his heart he knew that his injured wife loved him devotedly—"there is no use in prolonging this scene," said he, rising impatiently, and kicking a stool that lay before him—"I have resolved on leaving England,

and my parents may then regret their reproofs—I have effected my exchange, and I hope next month to sail for India, there I hope for a life of excitement, to make me forget my unfortunate marriage.—You shall hear from me before I go,”—he hastened from the room—he did not trust himself to say good-bye, and he passed his son hurriedly at the hall door, and the child half fearfully hid its face in Ellen’s dress,—he was gone—and so they parted.

Charlotte rose from her knees, saying in a low voice—“ Roland—Roland—come back—to one that left——” she staggered, and fell senseless on the floor, and soon after Ellen found her, and with the assistance of the landlady, undressed her and put her into bed, and a restless night poor Charlotte spent—she hoped vainly for a week that her husband would return, and take her with him.

The sixth anniversary of her wedding day came, and the evening of it brought her a

few hasty lines from Roland—from the one she so loved—for whom she had left father and mother, brothers and sisters and home, and country, and when she read the chilling lines, her hopes of future happiness—her dreams of bliss quickly vanished, and left her with the certainty that all her husband's love for her, had faded for ever.

He acquainted her in brief terms, that he thought it better they should be separated; their dispositions were not congenial: he hoped to leave England the following week, and he enclosed her £20. £500 alone remained of her own fortune, and this he placed for her use, in a banker's hands, in London, the interest of this sum, he thought, with prudent economy, ought to be amply sufficient to supply her wants, and he concluded by requesting she would not become a burden to his family—her own she might endeavour to be reconciled to.

She read and re-read the letter, and felt her

heart breaking, but a mother's holy love sustained her, and for her boy's sake she wished to live; yet her fate, for a time after this shock, seemed doubtful; she was attacked with fever, and languished for weeks. She had no doctor to attend her—no attendant but Ellen, whilst little Roland would climb on the bed and nestle close to his sick mother, and no commands or entreaties would keep him away—the young mother recovered, and the beautiful boy escaped all infection.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"ELLEN," said Charlotte, one morning after her recovery, "the vessel, with my husband, must have sailed, and as I can have no tie to keep me in England, and there is no use in trying for my parents' forgiveness, and even if I were to obtain it," added she, sighing, "I should not let them know of my present situation. I dread too being recognised in England, so I intend going to reside on the Continent, in some cheap place, where I can live

on my small means, and support my boy. You have been a good and a kind friend to me, and now we must part, for indeed I can no longer afford to keep a servant," and the tears sprang to her eyes.

"Mistress, dearest mistress !" exclaimed the faithful creature, "don't send me from you.—I want no wages,—I'll work for my bread, but I will never leave you and my darling master Roland. I have some small savings that will carry me some part of the way, and perhaps better days may come."

Charlotte granted her request, and together they went to London ; here they remained for a week, in small lodgings ; the last time she had been in that city, how differently she felt.—She was then on her return from Paris, from school, the beloved daughter of an indulgent father, who took care to show her every spot worth seeing—who enjoyed, with her, every gaiety that money could procure, and now—now she was the forsaken wife. Charlotte sold

every valuable she possessed, but a small diamond brooch, which contained her husband's hair—his only gift to her—and leaving her address at the banker's, she quitted England, which she had entered six years before, with such bright hopes of happiness, now so cruelly blasted. She reached Geneva, which the banker, a good natured man, had recommended her. In a small cottage, on the border of the lake, she hired two rooms, she could there live within her income, trifling though it was. Her boy was yet no great additional expense to her, and Ellen was their sole servant. Charlotte had brought a few books with her, and there she commenced a mother's sweetest task of teaching her child his letters, and truly these first lessons were lessons of love, for never was seen a more devoted teacher, nor a fonder pupil. By the lake they wandered, the faithful Ellen often with them, and when Charlotte returned to her humble fare, she thought how happy she

could be in that lowly Swiss cottage, with *all* she loved. What a picture of this world's uncertainty did her fate present ! At best, how little to be relied on are that world's joys, where very few escape through life without suffering, and many suffer all their lives.

The London banker had taken a great interest in our heroine, her pale and delicate looks moved his pity, and still more, he felt admiration for that deep love she showed for her boy. Of her history he knew nothing, her name alone she had told.

Roland had placed the £500, for her use, in her own name ; he frequently forwarded her newspapers.

In one of these, Ellen read one day, Manuel's marriage, and hastening to her mistress who was seated by the lake's edge, with her boy gambolling about her, she told the news.

Charlotte was really delighted. Her new

sister was her old friend, Alicia Masterton, and fervently she wished them every happiness. "Alicia would have written to me, had she known my address," thought she, as the tears started to her eyes,—“but of course they saw Roland's exchange of regiment, and think I am with him. Thank God they don't know how he has treated me.” Eight months more was added to Charlotte's life, and still she lived on for her son, at the end of that time, a letter came to her, from London, directed by her banker,—a certain tremour came over her as she broke the seal, despite her fears that Roland had ceased to care for her, a certain hope would cling with desperate tenacity to her heart, that he would return some day, to her, and love her well, and repay her for all she had suffered for his sake. Oh! when does hope, that blessed comforter, forsake us in this life!

The letter enclosed one from Alicia, written

the day before her marriage, it had followed Roland to India, and had been by him sent to the banker's, for Charlotte.

Alicia was amiable and gentle, yet, withal, possessing sufficient energy to make Manuel a good wife; they had known each other long and they were much attached. She mentioned that Mary had a lover, an acquaintance of Charlotte's, Lord Adrian Wilson; she remembered the fatal ball, at which she had danced with him. Alicia praised him greatly, and said :

“ ‘ Mr. and Mrs. O'Carroll highly approve of him, for a son-in-law. Mary is young,’ ” continued she, “ but seventeen, so her parents wish the marriage not to take place for another year. You are not forgotten, dearest Charlotte,” added she, “ and we must hope time will restore you to us all.” ”

Charlotte prayed in all sincerity that her dear sister might, in her happy and prosper-

ous marriage, make her parents forget the unhappiness her bad one had caused them. The quiet monotony of her days passed slowly by, and many a tear she shed when she thought of her husband's coldness and neglect. Hitherto her usual small remittances of money from her London banker had been paid regularly, but suddenly they ceased, and she wrote to him, and learned from an assistant of his that he had failed—here was she then in a foreign land—with a helpless child—without a friend to relieve her poverty, without sufficient money to take her back to England.—For herself she felt she did not care—she could beg she would starve—but her boy—and she gazed on him placidly sleeping before her—she wrung her hands in heartfelt agony. Her thoughts reverted to her own happy home, where peace and plenty reigned—she remembered her father's unbounded generosity—his gratification of her every wish—and now she

had only a mere trifling sum of money to feed her child.—Her own dress was too plain and too coarse in its texture to be sold—she took up her little boy's frock, it was of fine material, for with a mother's pardonable vanity she had been extravagant in dressing him—she opened her work-box, there, carefully wrapt in cotton, was her husband's bridal present—the small diamond brooch, his hair was set in it, and she replaced it, vowing but the bitterest poverty should not make her part with it—and that poverty came slowly on—for a few days, she ate only one meal, her frugal dinner, trying to have enough of bread for her boy; and Ellen after sometime remarked her, and urged her to give up the custom, showing her if she lost her health what misery her child would suffer.

Charlotte applied at all the schools in Geneva, hoping the aid of an English teacher would be accepted, but at all of them she was

rejected; at one indeed the mistress told her that in three months, if she called again, she might obtain employment; but in the meantime what was to support her.

Ellen too, had tried to get plain work, but could not succeed.

Poor Charlotte hastening home, took out the precious brooch, and with faltering tones bid Ellen go and sell it, "and do not give it until you get its full value, Ellen," added she, and she took her little boy in her arms, and hastened away to a favourite resting-place by the shore of the beautiful lake; she sat down, and letting the child play about, she there tried to subdue her excited feelings. Most truly there is something peculiarly soothing in a view of the wonderful works of the creation; we gaze upon them, and we think of the hand that made them—we feel what He has in store for those that serve him faithfully here below, must be indeed fair and

beautiful to the sight, when this earth, the dwelling-place of so much misery—is so lovely. Charlotte sat a long time wrapt in thought, a smile beamed in her eye when Ellen approached.

“ Oh ! dear, mistress,” said she, advancing hastily—“ here is your brooch, and may the Lord preserve you from ever needing to sell it,” and thoughts varied and delightful rushed quickly through poor Charlotte’s brain—her husband returning—was her first idea, and it sent a glow to her very temples, for seldom was he absent from her mind.

Ellen observed her agitation, and added quickly, “ ’tis nothing great that offers, dearest mistress ; in the jeweller’s shop, I loitered about some time, before I produced the brooch, and, I thank God, I had no occasion to do so at all.—In the shop, there is a young man that speaks English, he spoke to me the day I took in Master Roland to see the musical

clock, and he now remembered, me, for he advanced and asked me "if he could do anything for me," very civilly indeed, and I thanked him, and taking out the brooch leisurely, for I was very loth to part with it."

"As you are English ma'am," says the young man, "you may know some person this advertisement would suit."

"He handed me this paper; indeed, I longed to tell him I was not English at all, but Irish, but I thought, may be he would find fault with the brogue, as they used to do in England and Scotland, so I held my tongue—perhaps, this place will do for you, dear mistress," added she, giving Charlotte the paper.

Charlotte read.

Ellen continued—"when I thought you might get the situation, I kept the brooch, and telling the man I knew a young lady

anxious to get a place of the kind, I told him I would return about the business."

"Lady Darntalte," said Charlotte, musing, when she had read the advertisement, "very surely I have heard that name before, yet, now I cannot recollect where—Ellen, indeed, I thank you very much, and this I hope will relieve our poverty—perhaps, I may suit, though I am Irish, yet, I believe, I have not the brogue," said she, smiling—"Roland used to say so," sighed she, in a low voice.

The advertiser is anxious to secure the services of an English person, with a correct pronunciation, and too, a grammatical knowledge of French—to give morning lessons in English, and French studies to three young ladies—for teaching Italian to one, and music to all, an extra allowance.

"Now, Ellen, we must lose no time, I will leave Roland in charge to our old hostess, Gabrielle, and you will come with me to the jeweller's shop, to make enquiries," and Roland

quietly remained, for though a very lively child, he was very docile.

Charlotte dressed in a plain black dress, and a close bonnet, hastened to the jeweller's shop, here she was directed to a villa about a quarter of a mile from Geneva.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHARLOTTE lost no time in reaching the villa, for she feared to lose the situation; on her way her thoughts strayed to her school days—“Oh, father,” thought she, “when you bestowed so much expense on my education, how little you thought I should be forced to use my accomplishments, but happy indeed am I in having any means of supporting my boy.”

The villa was a beautifully situated one among the many that rise around Geneva's lake.—The hall-door was soon gained, and Charlotte with a palpitating heart, enquired for Lady Darntalte, "you must follow me, Ellen," said she, "I should not like to appear alone," and they were shown into a room, where a very pleasing-looking lady, in the prime of life sat working, near her was a young one drawing, both rose politely, and Charlotte in a few simple words told her errand, and added "that she hoped she should please."

"I shall be delighted to secure your services for my girls," replied Lady Darntalte, in a sweet-toned voice; "we have all been leading a very roaming life, but we are come to settle in this villa, for six months at least, and I hope, under your care, they will make up for lost time: go Rolandina," said Lady Darntalte, turning to the young lady near her, "go, love, and bring down your little sisters."

The lady rose and left the room.

Charlotte thought that even for her name, she would try to improve her.

"It is usual," said Lady Darntalte, politely, "when taking a governess, to ask for references as to character; but from one of your appearance and manner, I feel I need not."

"Madam," said Charlotte, and the tears glistened in her eyes, "I am here a friendless stranger, living in a small cottage near Geneva, with my only child, a little boy, and this friend," pointing to Ellen; "my husband ——" she paused agitated.

Lady Darntalte kindly interrupted her; "you have told me quite enough.—May I know your name?"

"Percie, madam," answered Charlotte, "may you never have cause to regret your kindness towards a stranger."

"As to salary," continued Lady Darntalte, "you must name that yourself. I shall require your attendance for four or five hours every morning.—You can undertake to teach

my girls the usual branches of an English education, and French too."

Charlotte said she could, and that she had spent three years in a Parisian school.

"I should like Rolandina to learn the rudiments of Italian, Mrs. Percie,—have you studied that language?"

"Yes ; madam," replied she.

"Are you musical? can you play on any instrument, or can you sing?"

"I can do both, your Ladyship," answered Charlotte, timidly, and she thought of him far, far away, who once loved to hear her music.

"You must pardon all these questions," said Lady Darntalte, smiling.

"I am very happy indeed, to have an opportunity of answering them," replied Charlotte, "and if I please your ladyship, I shall feel great pleasure."

Rolandina then entered, leading two little girls, apparently about six and seven years

old, she introduced them to Charlotte by their christian names.

She gazed on the young ones' countenances, as if recalling some remembered face.

Lady Darntalte rang the bell, and a servant entered, bearing a tray of refreshments, she politely helped Charlotte and Ellen to some, it was the first food the former had touched that day.

She took her leave of Lady Darntalte, promising to come early next morning, for her final decision, and feeling that she should like her greatly.

"Those children remind me certainly of some one I knew," said Charlotte to Ellen, on their way homewards, but she failed in recollecting who it was.

Little Roland's delight at seeing his mother, made her feel quite happy.

"They were taking their homely dinner, when old Bénôit, their host, entered, and apologising to Charlotte, reminded her that the

rent of her rooms had been due for some weeks.

She knew it but too well, and seeing the old man look impatient, she promised to pay it on the morrow.

"And why not to night, madam?" asked old Bénôit; "the truth is, I like punctuality. I should be sorry to annoy such a nice lady as you, but if you please, I'll have my money before I go to bed, and too, you owe Gabrielle for bread and milk."

"True," said Charlotte, meekly, "you shall have your money within the hour," and she put on her bonnet, and, taking the brooch, sold it,—telling the jeweller how much obliged she should feel to him if he delayed disposing of it for one month;—"before that," thought she, "I may be able to redeem it. Perhaps Lady Darntalte will give me some of my salary in advance."

She paid old Bénôit and his wife, and received their assurances that they hoped she

would always remain with them, with a feeling of pleasure and obligation, for in a stranger's land any friendliness was a treasured gift.

Next morning early saw Charlotte punctual to her appointment with Lady Darntalte, who received her very graciously in a large sitting room, in which was a harp and piano. The young ladies were called, and Charlotte, after examining their books, of which they had a large supply, commenced examining them. She found Rolandina, who was about fourteen years old, very forward and most willing to learn, but the young ones were giddy and very backward, and seemed completely spoiled pets.

Lady Darntalte expressed herself very much pleased with Charlotte's first attempt, and said—

“Now Mrs. Percie, I will engage you, and you must name your salary.”

Seeing her hesitate she asked, “shall I do so?”

She named one Charlotte thought high, but she determined to exert herself and improve her pupils to the utmost.

Perhaps now you would let me hear some music, Mrs. Percie," said Lady Darntalte ; "Rolandina plays prettily, and has a decided taste. I love music, and so does my husband, and he is a great judge too; in his last letter he hopes Sophy and Amy will be able to play on the piano, when he returns."

Charlotte willingly sat to the piano, and then at Lady Darntalte's request, to the harp, and she was really delighted and surprised by her performance.

"Do you sing, Mrs. Percie?" asked Rolandina.

"A little," replied she; and she felt she owed them every exertion, so she commenced striking an accompaniment on the harp. It was long since she had sung, except for little Roland, and she hesitated what to commence. The Spanish song of former days occurred to

her, and she began it, and sang it with deep feeling, and tears stole down her cheeks, when she concluded, for Henry, her own loved Henry, was before her as he sang that song with her, on many a merry day.

She gracefully apologised for her emotion, saying, "it was a long time since she had attempted that song, and then," added she, mournfully, "it was with those that are dead and gone."

"How glad uncle Mandorne would be to hear that Spanish song," exclaimed Rolandina, taking Charlotte's hand kindly; "he spent some years in Spain," continued she, "and he raves of every thing Spanish."

"Do you remember, mamma, the beautiful Spanish girl, he said he knew long ago in Ireland?"

"Yes, love," replied her mother; "she was not quite Spanish, though—but Irish, with a Spanish mother."

"And she had an extraordinary name," said Rolandina—Lotta, it was, for I called the big

doll, uncle brought me from Naples, after her."

"We never heard of this famous beauty of his, until he had visited Spain," said Lady Darntalte, "and then, you know, he went expressly to Cardon Hall to see her, but—you are ill, assuredly, Mrs. Percis," said she, eagerly observing Charlotte's blanched cheek.

Rolandina hastened and brought her a glass of water, which she drank off with many a silent sigh.

"My health has not been very strong of late years, madam," said Charlotte.

"You must not fatigue yourself by coming here too early," said Lady Darntalte, kindly. "I could send a carriage for you."

"Oh, your ladyship is too kind," replied Charlotte, gratefully, "but the walk does me good," and she rose to take leave.

Lady Darntalte put into her hands her salary, three months in advance, and Charlotte was guilty of the extravagance of buying her

boy some cakes that evening, and with some of the remainder, and the money she had got the night before for the brooch, she released it, and felt happier than she had done since she left England.

Every day saw her punctually attending her young pupils. The eldest, Lady Rolandina, she knew was Lady Darntalte's eldest daughter, by a first marriage, and the little things only her half-sisters, but she knew them only by their christian names; they were not at all like her remembrance of their uncle Lord Mandorne, but still they were like some familiar face. Their father was absent in England.

Six months since Charlotte's engagement saw her attending her young pupils, and each day Lady Darntalte was more pleased with her, and she felt grateful for her polite and unremitting attentions.

Her husband, she told Charlotte one day

had been obliged to prolong his stay in England, and as he wished her to take the villa for six months more, she gladly renewed her engagement with our heroine, who, poor thing, was delighted at a continuation of her means of support for her boy. Her attached and faithful Ellen was not forgotten.

On several sundays, by Lady Darntalte's request, she brought little Roland to the villa. He played with the children and to Rolandina took a particular fancy.

"We have the same name, Roland," said she, one day, to him, in play, "so you must marry me."

"Oh, no," said he, gravely, shaking his curly head, "I never will marry, I will always live with my own darling mamma, and when I'm a big man I'll build a house for her,"

"Well, shall I live with you," persisted Rolandina, "and be your wife, and be very fond of your mamma."

"Then I will marry you," said Roland, putting up his beautiful little face to be kissed.

Charlotte sighed bitterly when she heard the childish dialogue.

The year was now nearly completed, when one day Charlotte was returning from the villa to her humble cottage, and when near Geneva, a travelling carriage passed her with two gentlemen in it and one of them turning to the other, said :

"What a beautiful figure that creature is, Charles ! I wish we could see her face."

On reaching their destination, which was Lady Darntalte's villa, they spoke of the lady they had met and described her.

"That must be our dear governess," said Rolandina.

"She is a widow," said Lady Darntalte to her brother, "and sings Spanish songs, and has black eyes, so take care of your heart."

"Oh, no fear of that," replied her husband, laughing, "for Mandorne's heart and hand are pledged to a real Donna Julietta, Paulina Maria De Branciforte, we met in London."

The next day Charlotte arrived at her usual hour, and began teaching her pupils.

Rolandina immediately spoke of her father's return, and too of her uncle Mandorne's accompanying him, and she looked with great amazement at her governess' changing colour.

Charlotte was seated at the harp, tuning it, preparatory to giving Rolandina her lesson, when the door opened, and Lady Darntalte entered, followed by her husband and Lord Mandorne, and in one glance Charlotte recognised, in the former, her lover of by-gone days, Charles Cardon; she tremblingly curtsied to Lady Darntalte's polite introduction, and she *felt* he looked as if he knew her.

"Mrs. Percie," he repeated doubtfully; and after expressing in cold terms his thanks for her care of ~~his~~ children, and he laid a sneering emphasis on the pronoun, quitted the room.

Poor Charlotte was indeed changed since he parted with her, in blooming beauty at her happy home.—Her once very lovely face was thin, almost to emaciation, and marked with the small pox: her hair was silvered by many a straggling grey hair, telling how full of woe had been her young life.

And did Charles Cardon recognise in the altered being, before him, the beautiful Charlotte O'Carroll? he did—he knew of her marriage, of her name, and he saw before him, without the kind feelings of an old acquaintance, the one who had rejected his addresses.

Poor Charlotte felt deeply her situation, and with a mind wandering and ill at ease, she concluded her lessons.

Rolandina walked with her to the high road, and there bid her good-bye affectionately, sending a pretty English toy to Roland.

That evening brought a very kind letter from Lady Darntalte, enclosing her salary, and saying, her future services would be dispensed with.

Charlotte determined next day to quit Geneva, but when it came she was too ill to move, and for weeks she languished under the effects of a slow fever. She was slowly recovering, when a letter reached her from the London banker, full of regrets and apologies for having deprived her so long of her little salary, and now, as his affairs were settled, offering her the principal of her money, or a continuation of the yearly interest, and enclosed was the balance due to her, and she felt comparatively rich. She wrote to the banker, accepting the latter proposal, and told him she intended leaving Geneva.

The old couple she lived with had a daugh-

ter married and settled in Dieppe ; to her, therefore, Charlotte prepared to go, and with regret she left her humble cottage, where she had learned a degree of contentment, but her better judgment overcame her wishes, and too she felt some pleasure in going to Dieppe, it was near *home*. Poor thing, she yet called England home !

The day before she left, she wrote a few lines of grateful thanks to Lady Darntalte, and quitted Switzerland, without having seen her or any of her family. From Rolandina she had a kind and affectionate letter, accompanying two valuable books for herself, and a beautiful cashmere dress for little Roland, of which the amiable girl begged her acceptance, with her love.

Charlotte dressed her delighted boy in his new coat, of which he was very proud.

CHAPTER XXV.

BRIGHT and beautiful shone the morning that ushered in Mary O'Carroll's bridal, and bright and beautiful looked the smiling bride. She was seated in her mother's dressing room waiting the arrival of the Bishop of W—— who was to perform the marriage ceremony.

By her side sat her sister-in-law, Alicia, Manuel's wife, who seemed busy decorating a very small baby's cap, with white rosettes.

Camilla stood near, arranging some orange blossoms, which she fastened carefully and tastefully in her sister's hair, and then placed a

long veil over her head, saying, "Adrian will I am sure admire my taste," and she kissed her sister's glowing cheek. "Oh, how calmly you sit there, Mary," said she, "and I feel all trembling, and Alicia looks as quiet and staid as a sober matron of fifty—let me see you are not yet three years married."

"Only two years and four months, dear Cammie," replied Alicia, smiling, "and had not Adrian's father died, inopportunately, Mary would have been now a sedate, sober matron like me."

In the drawing room at Coomcarne, sat Mrs. O'Carroll, reclining in an easy chair, she looked delicate, indeed she was only just recovering from an attack of illness; her husband, stood near and his placid countenance wore a shade of thought more than when last we saw him, his hair too had become very grey, and now as his breast heaves with a sigh he is thinking of his two children—one gone for ever, and the other fondly remembered, though far away.

In a window stood a young and graceful looking man, apparently very anxious for some arrival: it was Lord Adrian Wilson, the bridegroom, "Here he comes," exclaimed he, as a carriage drove quickly round the avenue, and Mr. O'Carroll followed him to the hall door to welcome the Bishop—Father Owen was with him and another clergyman, and they all entered the drawing room.

"I will now seek my child," said Mr. O'Carroll, and he ascended to his wife's dressing room, folded her in a long embrace, and led her blushing to the drawing room. The ceremony was over soon—the final benediction spoken, and Mary was the happy wife of the man she loved—her parents' choice—and her own youthful fancy. She rose steadily from her knees, received the embraces and congratulations of those around her, and then taking her husband's hand they both advanced to where Mr. O'Carroll was standing, and knelt before him.

"Father—dearest father," said Mary, in a low but distinct voice, "I am here to sue for your forgiveness for Charlotte—on this my my bridal day, you will not surely refuse me—on my knees I beg it—and Adrian entreats it too."

"Most ardently I do," said Adrian.

"My child—my child—I cannot—I must not forego my determination, that I never would forgive her—why make me on your bridal day, refuse you a request"—he seemed greatly moved.

Manuel stepped forward.—"Dear father," said he, "on the day I came of age, I urged this demand; you have withheld your forgiveness for eight years from our sister, send it to her *now*, and let her have the comfort of knowing in a far distant land—an unhealthy and dangerous land too—that you forgive her only fault. Make us all happy on this day, and, let the dear bride here, who has married with your consent and approbation—who has

delayed her marriage to please you, let her be the writer of the joyful tidings to Charlotte."

"No—my son—no—no," said Mr. O'Carroll, deeply agitated.

"And father," continued Manuel, "if Charlotte should fall a victim to the climate, if she *die* in that foreign land, without your blessing, how much you will regret it.—Were our beloved Henry here to-day how warmly he would plead for his dearest sister's pardon—he is gone, father—think of his wishes—forgive Charlotte even for his dear sake—he loved her fondly."

"You have conquered the old man," sobbed Mr. O'Carroll—"I forgive Charlotte—from my heart—ah! Henry," and he cried like a child.

There was not a dry eye in that room, and yet the meeting was a very happy one.

In the afternoon of that day, a travelling carriage and four conveyed the bride and

bridegroom from Coomcarne Park towards the town of Killarney, where amid the lovely and romantic scenery surrounding it, they were to spend the honeymoon.

Before Mary quitted her home, she wrote a letter to poor Charlotte, and her father added a few lines to it, and her mother and Camilla wrote too, and what joy that letter would have given her.—It was directed to the care of Roland, as Captain Percie, — regiment— but it never reached his hands—he had left that regiment when it came to India, and had been promoted to a Majority.

“To-morrow we may expect dear Mary back,” said Mrs. O’Carroll, feebly to Camilla, who sat working by her bedside, for she had been confined to her room with illness since the wedding-day—“I shall be up to receive them, I hope Manuel and Alicia will come early.”

“They promised to come to-day, dear mamma,” replied Camilla, “but Alicia said

they could not leave until the evening, as they are so very busy, arranging their house; the baby, however, it is to be sent over in the afternoon, and here he comes I declare," added she, jumping up, as a nurse entered with a blooming boy in her arms, who stretched out his little hands to Camilla, and crowed and laughed when she took him.—"Speak of an angel and 'tis sure to appear." "And indeed, you are a little angel," she added, as she kissed her little nephew. "Come nurse, and undress master Henry—why he is as muffled as if it were December, and it is bonnie May."

In the neighbourhood of Coomcarne Park, some changes had taken place, since the commencement of our tale; Mrs. Cardon was dead, and Amelia still a spinster, was living in England with an aunt. Cardon Hall had been sold, and bought by Manuel, and his first act was to change its name to its original one, of Ardglokane.

Mary and her husband returned next day,

and after a very pleasant month spent alternately between Coomcarne and Ardglohane, the young people all agreed to take a continental tour—Manuel and his wife—Adrian and Mary, and Camilla was asked to join them, and very joyfully she consented.

Mr. O'Carroll took a house at the Cove of Cork, the beautiful Clifton of Ireland, and there he and his wife, Miss Maldon and Manuel's baby, were to spend the following six months. Their home looked deserted and they were glad of the change.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHARLOTTE,—quite unconscious of the change that had taken place in her parents' feelings,—was settled at Dieppe, in a small lodging, by the sea shore, and she had been there but a short time when little Roland's birthday came. On it he completed his sixth year, and Charlotte rose in the morning determined on devoting that day entirely to his amusement, yet not one day passed that was not devoted to his service.—She taught him his childish lessons—she walked and played with him—her whole happiness was centered

in him, and he repaid her love by a tenderness and docility, which made his mother's only enjoyment.

It was the 3rd of August, and that evening, at Roland's request, she strolled with him into some fields, by the road side, a short distance from the town. Roland was in high glee, and he culled many a wild flower, and ran sportingly from his mother's side, but to return again with fresh blossoms. Her hands were quite full, yet she would not refuse to gratify her boy by taking what gave him pleasure to gather for her.

"Mamma," exclaimed Roland, bringing her a bunch of wild roses, "look, we'll take these home to Ellen."

His mother took them and admired them to please her child, but her thoughts were then far away, amid the flowers and walks of her childhood's home. The child observing her looks, said, "you look tired, dear mamma, you must rest under this tree, and I'll go and fetch

another bunch for poor little Aline, you know she loves flowers, and she is too idle to come out."

Aline was their hostess's little daughter.

Charlotte sat down, where he had pointed out, and away ran the amiable child. He was gone a very short time, when the sound of merry voices reached Charlotte. She looked round, and, advancing on the pathway she had just past, was a group of ladies and gentlemen—three of the former, two of the latter. Charlotte's first impulse was to rise, and walk quickly after her son, and return home, but they were now very near, and she thought the best way to pass unnoticed was to remain where she was, so she bent her head and seemed busily engaged in arranging the flowers in her lap. She dreaded any recognition since Charles Cardon's. The party advanced, they spoke English, and Charlotte well knew one voice among them—it was Manuel's. She half rose to clasp her brother

to her bosom, but a thought, quick as lightning, fled through her brain—that thought was of her husband.

“They think I am happy with him, as I should be,” thought she; “if I make myself known I must tell of his unkindness, of his neglect.”

Pure and holy was that forsaken wife’s love, when it so quickly repressed the warm feelings of sisterly affection. Charlotte stirred not, although many tears glittered on the flowers she bent over.

The group advanced. One sweet young voice said, in merry tones,—

“Manuel, as you are to be our guide through our travels, tell me how long must we remain in this dirty looking town. I set out on my tour determined to admire every thing, but here I can see nothing to excite my admiration, save these fields, and even they have a parched, brown look, unlike the green meadows of our emerald isle.”

"Cammie, I shall be ready, if you please, to leave this place to-morrow, but we must all agree.—Come, Alicia, what say you?"

"I think we had best proceed," answered his wife.

"And, Mary, what do you and Adrian wish?"

"Oh," replied a gay young man's voice, "Mary and I have been too lately made one to disagree yet; so we say leave to-morrow, by all means. I fully agree with Cammie, in seeing nothing to admire here."

They passed close by Charlotte. Her feelings may be more easily fancied than described.

"I hope," said Camilla, "the hotels will be better elsewhere than here, for that dingy apartment we have got on the ground floor, looking into the dirty court-yard, is enough to give one the horrors—yet variety is charming," added she, gaily, "and before this time—six months, I suppose—we shall all think the hotel at Dieppe quite good enough.

Oh, what pleasure we have before us; only think of the long letters I shall write to dear mamma, and Miss Maldon."

"Is that to be your greatest pleasure, Cammie?" asked Adrian; "ladies are always devoted to letter writing."

"Neither Mary nor Alicia will have time to write, I daresay," answered she, "both will be so taken up with their husbands.—I wish I had brought one on my travels."

"And given him up on your return home, aye, Cammie," said Adrian.

"Do look, what a lovely boy!" said Alicia; "he is like our little Henry.—Do let us speak to him."

Charlotte saw them advance towards Roland, and the distance prevented her hearing more. "What if my boy tell his name, and who I am," thought Charlotte, but Roland quickly left the strangers, and ran to his mother and beautiful he looked—his little cap was off, and filled with flowers.—His hair was

fair, like his father's, and curled all about his lovely face, which was beautifully flushed with exercise.—His best dress was on him, Rolandina's present, in honour of his birthday, and as Charlotte took the flowers, she saw the group turning and gazing on her boy.

“Like an English child,—very beautiful,” were expressions she heard from them, and taking her boy's hand, she hastened the shortest way to her humble dwelling—whilst the party continued their walk—when she reached it, she told Ellen, her companion of so many hours of her happiness and misery, her tale.

She silently admired her mistress' faithfulness towards her husband, when she thus sacrificed her best feelings, lest his reputation should suffer.

When little Roland was in bed, Charlotte quietly left her house, muffled up. The fair evening had changed, and a thick rain descended, but she heeded not the wet,—she

visited the different hotels, for she remembered Camilla's declaration, that their sitting apartment was on the ground floor; she peeped through every window, within her reach, for in the darkening twilight, she did not fear recognition; from one she was rudely repelled by a waiter. Lights appeared in one room, towards the window of it she hastened, and there was within such a group, as made her heart beat quickly. A large table was in the centre of the room, and on it were cups and saucers, and plates of cakes. Alicia sat near them, pouring out coffee, and by her side was Manuel, assisting her. A young lady and gentleman were bending over a map, at one end of the table, and another young lady was twining some wild flowers into a wreath; this she soon finished, and going towards a large mirror, which hung suspended on one side of the chamber, she fixed it in her beautiful black hair, and turning smilingly to the others said gaily :

"Thanks to that beautiful boy's nurse, we met, to night, my head is decorated—these are the flowers she left under the tree we saw her sitting by.—What a lovely child he was! yet he seemed so shy, he would not speak,—I hope we may see him to-morrow. Are you tracing our route, Mary?" asked she of the other young lady, and she seated herself near her.

"Yes, Cammie," replied Mary, "and Adrian is taking down the distances, that we may travel leisurely and enjoy ourselves."

There was a short pause, and with what loving eyes did Charlotte gaze on the group. Manuel had grown large and more manly looking—Alicia she thought had become pale, but Mary and Camilla, the little sisters of her girlhood, did she recognise them in the grown and beautiful girls before her,—the faces we love we long remember. Mary was slightly changed, but Cammie, the rosy pet of former years, was now an elegant, slight girl, her face

almost the same—gay and artless, and seeming still the pet of those around her.

“Poor Lotta! and poor dear Henry!” said Camilla, breaking the silence, “how they would have enjoyed this tour,” and Charlotte saw tears gleam in her bright eyes: “Alicia, is it not strange you never got an answer to your letter, to her, after your marriage?”

“It is indeed,” answered Alicia; “I saw in the paper, on Friday last, in London, that Captain Percie had obtained his Majority, but has exchanged into a regiment remaining in India, instead of returning home—they must like the climate, I think, and it must agree with them.”

“What joy will my letter give dear Lotta!” said Mary; “Oh, I should so like to see her now! Adrian, how you would love her so,” and she turned towards her husband.

“I certainly thought her very beautiful,” replied Adrian, “and liked her extremely.”

“I wish she had such a boy as the one we

met to night," said Manuel, "she was always so fond of children."

"Oh, we were such pets of her's, Mary," exclaimed Camilla, "long ago, and I never remember her speaking crossly to us, though we often bored her to play with us."

"When I saw that child, this evening," said Alicia, "he first struck me as like my little baby; and really when he looked up with his bright and beautiful smile, he reminded me, for the moment, of Charlotte, yet she had the blackest hair and eyes, and he had fair hair and the very bluest eye almost I ever saw, like a dark shaded violet."

And there stood Lotta—the still loved Lotta—listening to every word, her clothes thoroughly wet, and many a time she thought of rushing in among them; for nearly two hours she stood there still, and her aching heart found relief in hearing them mention their parents—their home—Miss Maldon; and the poor thing saw the good nights, and the

wife triumphed over the sister, and home—to her *home* she went, and kissing gently her sleeping boy, she gave free scope to her tears. And for all this love, her husband still left her, remained in India. Oh! the bitterness of the thought, that he had entirely forgotten her.

The next week brought Charlotte a newspaper from the good-natured banker; she saw her husband's exchange of regiment, and among the fashionable departures for the continent, she read the names of "Lord Adrian Wilson, and Lady, Mr. and Mrs. Manuel O'Carroll, Miss O'Carroll and suite," and she felt she could enjoy their happiness.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AND years quietly, but slowly, rolled on, and little Roland's ninth birth-day had passed, and still found Charlotte the same devoted mother, and Roland the same fond and docile boy. She had taught him, with a mother's attentive care, what she well could teach, but she saw he often wished to have companions of his own age, and she therefore placed him, as a day boarder, at a cheap boy's school, in the town, and she, during his absence—for he returned every night—earned more than enough to pay his school expences, by giving lessons in mu-

sic and singing, at a young ladies' school, and private lessons in English, to one or two families. Thus her time passed, and every holiday saw Roland as well provided with cakes and fruit, as his rich companions.

Now the fourteenth anniversary of her wedding-day came, and it dawned in, as summer brightness, as if no cloud had obscured the happiness she, on that day, thought she had secured, and Charlotte in the evening strayed with her son, among those fields, and rested beneath that tree, where she had met her brother and sisters, since then her favorite resting-place; and now, as she sat there in the stillness of that calm evening, her thoughts reverted to that husband, who had left her in coldness and dislike—who on that day had made her forget her duty to her parents, every thing but himself. She strolled slowly home with her boy by the hand, and she was met at the door by Aline, with a letter.

“It had only just come,” she said, “and as

Ellen was out, and it was marked with speed, her mother had sent her with it to Mrs. Percie."

Charlotte took the letter,—she saw the banker's writing, her sole correspondent, and she opened it tremblingly, fearing her little income was again to cease. She read it through, seemingly without much excitement. She turned pale as marble, and Roland, observing this, ran to her—she pressed him again and again to her bosom, saying frantically—"my boy—my boy—my own loved boy, your father is returned, is in England, in very bad health, and he sends for us to go to him, and to-morrow we will leave this—oh! my prayers are heard—my trials will be over, and how lovingly we'll nurse and tend thee, dearest Roland.—Look darling, there is his writing," and she kissed and kissed again a few words he had penned, which the banker enclosed, they were only:—

"Charlotte, I am ill—dying perhaps—if you ever loved me well, come now to me without

delay. Your repentant husband, Roland Percie."

"Oh! don't believe he is so ill, dearest boy," said Charlotte, sobbing, "he will recover, we will take him to Marthorpe—to Ireland, and we shall be so happy, and surely my parents will now forgive me," and she wept plentifully, in very joyousness of spirit, and no intreaty was necessary to urge that devoted wife to forgive her husband.

The banker enclosed Charlotte's money, she discharged all her little debts, spent the night in glad preparations, and with her lovely boy and faithful Ellen left Dieppe early next morning. The banker awaited her in London, at an hotel he had fixed on, and in haste, and with many anticipations of happiness, she hastened from the carriage. The banker met her at the door and introduced himself—Charlotte had quite forgotten him—he led her tremblingly into a room, and told her that her husband had come home, but to die!"

"Oh! let me go to him instantly," said Charlotte, weeping.

"Not while you are so much excited," said the banker mournfully.

"Oh! I will check my feelings," urged Charlotte, "believe me he shall see no emotion of mine to distress, or harm him."

"None could now have that effect, Mrs. Percie," said he, solemnly—"he is dead since morning."

Where were now her hopes of happiness? she did not scream—no sound escaped her lips, but she followed the banker into a room adjoining, noiselessly with a creeping step, as if she feared to awake him, who lay extended before her on a bed—stiff and cold in death's embrace—his face was worn and bronzed—his once luxuriant hair was scanty and grizzled, and none could recognise in the wreck of the man before them, the once handsome Roland Percie; a few years of Indian dissipation had done its work.

Charlotte flung herself on her knees by the corpse, and kissed again and again those clay cold lips that had caused her to forget home and friends and country; now indeed she felt the full punishment of her fault, and her heart would have broken but for her boy.

It is a heart-rending sight to see the one we loved dearly dead before us.—To know that those eyes that have looked so kindly on us, are dimmed for ever! those lips that spoke such soft sweet words are mute for ever! and that heart that beat so lovingly for us is stilled for ever, and ever! Poor Roland he was in the very prime of life, many happy years might have been his, but now he was gone—never more to gladden the friends of his youth; his desk was opened and there were found several letters—one to the banker bequeathing his wealth, for he had amassed a large fortune in the East, to his care for Charlotte. There was a letter to Charlotte, and one to her father and mother, and to his own parents, and she

read her's on her knees by the corpse; it was a kind and loving letter, for he wrote he knew for the last time—it was deeply penitent yet relying on her forgiveness—It told plainly his errors without any attempt at palliation. He had lived he said, “a life of pleasure and dissipation in India—sometimes he would think of her, and promise himself he would be a good husband, if when he returned he found her alive.—Years fled by him—he liked his oriental life, and he continued in it until disease came, and the physicians in attendance on him, pronounced his only chance of life lay in a return to his native land—homeward then he came, lingering on and still hoping for life when settled in his own country. In London he arrived worn to a mere skeleton, and barely lived six days after his arrival; he sent for the banker, from him learned Charlotte's abode, that she had lived abroad during his absence, and he sent for her—The day before his death he had written these letters, fearing she might

come too late, and he felt his hours were numbered. To little Roland there were a few lines, telling him to love his mother well, to make her forget his father's neglect by his fondness. The banker sent off the other letters, and added a line on an envelope of each by Charlotte's request, to say she had arrived.

By the corpse she watched unceasingly until it was conveyed to Marthorpe churchyard, its last resting-place; and then poor Charlotte, thought her youthful fault was more than atoned for. The next day saw Charlotte in a raging fever, and no persuasion of Mr. Redding, the good-natured banker, could induce young Roland to quit his mother's room, by her bedside he watched with untiring love, and when she sat up, it was his little hands smoothed the pillows that supported her—that held the cup of drink to her parching lips, and that watched her yet heavy eye to anticipate her wishes.—Two months after her husband's death saw her scarcely able to walk, slowly

travelling towards Marthorpe vicarage attended by Mr. Percie—here her mother-in-law received her with subdued grief, and nursed her with kindness, and young Roland in his happy youthful forgetfulness of sorrow regained his merriment, and did more by his childish endeavours to comfort his mother—to restore her to peace, than any of the attentions she received from those around her. And all this time where was her own father—where was his forgiveness—his love?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was a fair, beautiful morning in August : in the breakfast room, at Coomcarne Park, was Camilla O'Carroll, seated at the breakfast table, she seemed pale, and traces of recent tears were on her cheeks, and her sole breakfast, that morning, were a few sips of tea ; at the table were two doctors, eminent in their profession, they had been sent for by a fond husband, in the hope of warding off the foe that threatened to rob him of a dearly cherished wife, but human skill could not then avail.

The windows were open and the fresh air came in, filled with the odour by the beautiful flowers blooming outside. A figure appeared outside and vaulted into the room.

"I ran all the way across the fields from home, Aunt Cammie," said the new comer, "to know how dear grandmamma was this morning. I could not wait to have the pony saddled."

"She is in the same way, Harry," replied Camilla, "indeed she passed last night tranquilly, and is now dosing. Dear child, you are heated and flushed, you should not have run so fast."

"Is this your eldest brother's son, Miss O'Carroll?" asked one of the doctors, who was eating his breakfast as heartily as if sorrow and death were not around him.

"He is my only brother's eldest son," replied Camilla, with a gentle sigh.

"A very fine lad indeed," quoth the second doctor; "how many brothers and sisters have you, my little man?"

"I have one brother and two sisters, sir," answered Henry O'Carroll.

"I remember your brother Henry well, Miss O'Carroll," said the first speaker, "and this child seems to possess a strong resemblance to him."

"We love to think so, Doctor W——," said she gently, and breakfast being ended, she sought her dying mother's room.

Mrs. O'Carroll, with the restlessness of disease, wished to rise from her bed, and the doctors well knowing all hopes of her life were vain, permitted her to do so, she was dressed with such fond care by Camilla and Alicia, and a fond husband carried her gently to a sofa, in her dressing room, and there she lay, a yet handsome woman.

"Will not Manuel come to me to day, Alicia?" asked the invalid, in very weak, hollow tones. "I should like to see him once more, the dear boy, too, how like our Henry he is growing love," said she to her husband.

A gentle tap was heard at the door.

"Who is there?" enquired the invalid.

It was the parish priest, *Father Owen*, and with every sentiment of piety and fervour, the invalid received the last sacraments of her church. Then her family all assembled around her. *Manuel* was there with his two eldest children, and *Mrs. O'Carroll* spoke fondly to all; among the group, she was the only one disposed to converse, her husband was seated near her, every now and then supporting her head on his bosom. *Camilla* and *Alicia* and *Miss Maldon* were pale, and in the deepest grief.

"You all feel this too much," said *Mrs. O'Carroll*, her voice stronger than it had been for days, "but soon we shall all meet again, where no cares disturb one—where none die. Who told me *Roland Percie* was dead?"

"None dearest *Camilla*," replied her husband "he is still with his regiment in *India*."

"But he is dead—I tell you so, *Henry*," said

she, "he died two days ago," and in truth he had though none there knew it then; "and poor Charlotte," continued she, "how my heart has bled for her all these long, long years; you will love her, now! dearest Henry, and never again cause her a moment's care, promise me that."

"I do so most solemnly, dear Camilla," answered he.

"I know you will, my love," said she, faintly, "you have even been a comfort to me, through our married life you have been my joy, and in dying, my only regret is that you will miss me, but Lotta will now supply my place, and little Roland, you must love him too."

Camilla sobbed loudly.

"Oh! Cammie, my darling, why do you weep so? you know we must all die—it is only one before the other—what hour is that striking?"

"It is three o'clock, dearest Camilla," said her husband."

"Oh! so late."

"Dearest Mamma," said Camilla, "you must take a little broth now, it is your hour," and the amiable invalid took it from the hands of her daughter, and it was the last food she ever tasted.

"What a bright day it has been, Henry! and to end so sadly," said she laying her head heavily on his bosom. But the world I am going to is fairer than all, and our boy will meet me. How good the Almighty is! how wonderful are his ways! and muttering a prayer, she gently breathed her last sigh, in the arms of her husband. Deep and heartfelt was the grief her death caused.

Who that has been in the house with the dead body of those they love can forget the feelings they experienced. The funeral comes with a kind of relief to them, love they that departed being ever so fondly—there is something of rest connected with the tomb, which one cannot associate with the dead body lying there in its frightful ghastliness.

Mrs. O'Carroll's funeral was attended by many sorrowing hearts. Her benevolence had been unbounded, and, if according to the belief of her faith, prayers avail the departed soul, she had them offered up for her with all the ardour that distinguishes the prayers of an Irish catholic.

Poor Charlotte for sometime did not learn the new affliction that had befallen her; her state of health continued too weak to risk any shock, and but for the love she bore her beautiful boy, she would have sunk beneath the accumulation of misery. She had been six months a widow when she learned the tidings of her mother's death—a letter, a fond letter from her father, told her of it, and Charlotte felt how true it is that this world is full of the bitterest trials. She, at her still young age,—she was but thirty-three—in the prime of womanhood, to have suffered so much. She sought in religion, the only real soother of earthly woes. Her father asked her to come

to her *home*, to make it her dwelling place and her son's for their life time, but she would not thus consent to quit entirely her husband's home. She remained at Marthorpe Vicarage until the following spring, and then, accompanied by her faithful maid Ellen, and her lovely boy, she arrived at Coomcarne Park. Young Roland had never been there and he expressed his admiration very warmly as they drove through the avenue, and her thoughts wandered to the last two returns to this beautiful home,—first as a young gay girl, emancipated from school, and then as a happy girl, the affianced of her dearly loved husband, and she wept unrestrainedly.

“Dearest mamma, for my sake,” said her son, tenderly, “do not cry so,” and tears started to his own bright eyes! “you make me quite miserable.”

They reached the hall door, and Charlotte, as she descended the carriage steps, thought of the fond welcome she once before got there,

on her return from school. Manuel only received her, he folded her in his arms, and neither spoke, he led her towards the drawing-room, her father was there alone, and she threw herself into her father's arms, and sobbed out her sorrow for having caused him any vexation.

"It is all passed now, my child," said he in a subdued voice, "you have suffered deeply, and Oh ! we have suffered too," and tears trickled down his cheeks.

It was months before Charlotte regained her composure, here with the children she would sit and listen to their prattle, and only when Roland asked her to do any thing for him, did she exert herself ; her grief was settled, it annoyed none,—she seldom wept but when alone—she had become prematurely old.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FIVE years after Roland Percie's death his widow, still clad in deep mourning, sat working by an open window in a small cottage—it was a pretty, neat place, within half a mile of the town of Marthorpe, and from the window where Charlotte sat, you could see amid the trees the old church, near which reposed the ashes of her husband. She was little changed since last we saw her, either in appearance or feelings. Her cottage—the residence she chose amid many offered her—was in a sweet, quiet spot, and kept so neatly arranged. She sat

there now, embroidering a waistcoat, and to look on her you would know it was for some loved one, so carefully did she draw each stitch. She pauses in her work, and you may see a tear tremble in her eye as she looks towards the last resting-place of the one, whose memory she so deeply loved—and she thinks too of her visit to that same old churchyard with Emma Leslie, as a young, blithesome girl, and she remembers a sort of awe that stole upon her there in the midst of her gaiety, when Emma talked of her grave. How little she then thought she should walk almost daily to that same churchyard, to kneel by her husband's tomb.

The door of her sitting-room opened, and our old friend Ellen, in a very prim dress, plainly showing her to be an old maid, entered.

“He ought soon to be here now, Ellen,” said Charlotte, raising herself from her work—it is past coach hour.”

“He will soon, don't fear, dear mistress,” said Ellen.

He will like his new room, I think," observed Charlotte. "Where are his dogs? I should wish them to be in here to welcome him," and three well-fed dogs answered to a call and came bouncing in. "I hope his horse is in good condition," said the anxious mother—and her voice, though it had lost none of its sweetness, had yet a mournful tone.

There was a slight noise outside—the dogs barked in chorus, the door opened, and a tall, beautifully-formed young man rushed into Charlotte's arms.

"My beloved mother,"—"My darling boy," were exchanged between them, and a long embrace followed, and Ellen was not forgotten. Roland shook hands with her, and taking a parcel from his coat pocket, gave it to her, saying, "here is a prayer-book I brought you all the way from B——," a very handsomely bound one it was. Charlotte gazed delightedly on the noble countenance of her son.

"Dear mother, I have brought you five premiums. I knew they were the presents you

would like best," and he looked with real pleasure at her eager examinations of his prizes, and her praise of his exertions sounded far more sweetly on his ear than the many encomiums he had received from his masters, at college. And did not Charlotte feel happy as she gazed that day on her boy and knew of his warm attachment to her. Assuredly she did, and regrets for the past were mellowed by present content.

After an early dinner mother and son walked to Marthorpe churchyard, and both knelt long by the side of a handsome tomb, beneath which lay the mother's husband and the son's father. No weed was allowed to grow near that loved grave—around it was a strong iron paling with a small gate, which the mother kept locked—inside the railing grew and thrived there a laurel hedge, and inside this was all round a bed of flowers—how they flourished there under the care of that devoted wife!

"Come, dear mother, come," said young

Roland, coaxingly, "we must pay the vicarage a visit," and he drew his mother away from that tomb, and slowly they wended their way to where a kind welcome awaited them. Old Mr. Percie dearly loved his grandson; he, though now much advanced in years, was still active and lively, and his wife's health, though delicate, was not precarious, and both their attachment to the widow of their son had something bordering on veneration in it—they knew *all* she had suffered—what a wife she proved herself amid her husband's neglect, and they loved and cherished her in her affliction.

"How like his poor father Roland grows every year, my dear Charlotte," said her father-in-law to her, as they stood together in the drawing-room of the vicarage; and this was a likeness she, poor thing, loved to hear. Barton Percie lived almost entirely at Marthorpe vicarage. He had given up the law long since, or, as some of his witty friends observed, "the law had given him up." His

wife was there, and quite happy, in a natural coldness of disposition, which made her careless about her husband's love. Barton liked her "well enough," as he expressed himself—they had no family, and they got on together in a very common-place sort of way.

"Well, my dear boy, have you decided yet on what profession you will choose?" asked his grandfather, seating himself near Roland, who was busy describing his college life to his grandmother.

"I should prefer the army to any profession, my dear sir," replied he eagerly, "but——"

"And why 'but,' my love?" enquired his grandmother; "it was your poor father's choice."

"Were I to become an officer, grandmother," said the young man, "I might be sent on foreign service——" and he hesitated.

"I understand you, love," said Mrs. Percie; "what would your dear mother feel if you were separated?"

"She has been sorely tried in this life, and that dutiful love of yours does honour to your heart, my boy," said Mr. Percie, approvingly.

"Then the law is what I'll choose, grandfather," exclaimed Roland, "that is," added he modestly, "if I have talent enough for it."

"I believe there can be no doubt of that, Roland," said Mr. Percie; "but, if you dislike it after a trial, you can give it up—indeed there is no absolute necessity for your following any profession. The banker in London has a considerable sum of money of yours, and your mother's pension."

"Oh, my dear sir, I should hate an inactive life," interrupted Roland; "but you know I have a year more, before I leave O—— college."

"Do you really prefer it to going to any of our universities, Roland?" asked Barton Percie.

"I do, indeed, uncle," answered Roland; "I think it a super-excellent school, where the

soundest education may be obtained. The study of the English language, often neglected at other colleges, they there strictly attend to; and the classics are taught ably and thoroughly. Lord Archgolle, who is, you know, considered such a learned man, decides that it is certainly the best English school."

"Do they teach eloquence, there, Roland?" asked Barton, with a slight sneer.

Soon after, Roland and his mother sauntered homewards. A beautiful balmy June night it was, with the moon shining clearly in the deep blue heavens.

"And you continue to like your college life, my son," said his mother, in her soft, fond voice.

"I do, dearly, mother," responded he; "this year, you know, Lord Archgolle made it much pleasanter, for, since his return from the Continent, he has resided at his place, in S—— shire, only ten miles from O—— college, and he visited me frequently and brought the best

books with him. He has, on play-days, spent hours in my room, directing my taste for literature, and often speaking of you, mother,—a theme always dear to me ; but I assure you, you need dread no renewal of his proposals—he esteems your devotion to the dead too much for that,”—the young man was completely in his mother’s confidence—“I spent a week with Lord Archgolle,” continued Roland, and I made the acquaintance of his only child, Lady Josephine.”

“And what do you think of her my love?” asked his mother, a little eagerly.

“Why, Mamma, to tell you truth, I do admire her excessively—she is pretty—but that is not her charm, but the total absence from all affectation which she possesses, she with such brilliant expectations—that is her charm, mother.”

“She is nearly fifteen,” said Charlotte ; does her father seem to love her much?”

“Extremely, mother,” was the young man’s reply.

They gained their home, and Charlotte lay awake hours that night, thinking of her son—if he should form an unfortunate attachment to Lady Josephine, if her beloved son's happiness was destroyed, how miserable she would be.

The next week the mother and son went to Coomcarne Park, to pass some of the vacation there: during that time Roland had frequent letters from Lord Archgolle, and in every one Lady Josephine was mentioned, and the mother saw the father, at least, would not oppose her son's alliance with his daughter, if they wished for it.

CHAPTER XXX.

AND now years again had rolled by bringing few changes to the *Dramatis Personæ* of this tale; Charlotte continued the same devoted mother, doing what good she could, trying to alleviate distress, and either at her simple cottage, near Marthorpe, or at Coomcarne Park, many a blessing was showered on her path, and the wishes of the widow and the orphan took effect, and she experienced a quiet content. Often, indeed, she would sigh over the blighted dreams of her love, but

these regrets were in secret, her meek resignation betrayed no outward sorrow.

A bright August afternoon, a large party assembled in the drawing room at Coomcarne Park, to celebrate the natal day of Roland Percie—his completing his twenty-first year. The large drawing room was quite filled; by the fire, in an easy chair—though warm weather there was a fire—sat an old man, next him was a pale lady, whose hand he held clasped in his, and he seemed to be saying something very affectionate to her—it was our heroine, not much altered since we described her last, perhaps her hair had grown some shade whiter, but her simple mourning cap nearly concealed it; she continued to wear black. By her side stood her son with dazzling gaiety shining in his bright blue eyes; he had a small turquoise ring on his finger—it is the gift of his affianced bride. There was Manual in the prime of life with his wife beside him, both looking very contentedly at

their youngest daughter, a child of four years old, who was seated on the carpet near them playing with a dog. Mary and Adrian, and Camilla and her husband, Richard Leslie, were there, and there were groups of young creatures, the eldest Henry O'Carroll, Manuel's eldest son, and the youngest Camilla's youngest, a baby of a year old—all lovely and gay—looking like so many brothers and sisters—and Miss Malden was there too seated close to the fire, very old she had grown, but a sturdy boy from the group stood by her knee, and listened attentively to her explanation of a child's picture-book. It was a beautiful family meeting.—Yet when those that have passed many years amid the toils and troubles of life meet together, how very seldom can be found such a reunion free from regrets for the unforgotten dead. And all there assembled that evening had some one to sigh for—some sad remembrances of the past. But it was a happy meeting, for time softens

down all the roughest edges of grief, and sweetens the bitterness of it.

The evening passed on happily, among so many fair and happy young creatures, it was impossible to be sad.

"Mother, I have just now had such a letter by the post as makes me the happiest of mortals," observed Roland.

She smiled delightedly on her son.

"It is from Lord Archgolle," continued he, "and everything I could wish it to be."

"You will come with me by and bye, my dear Roland, to my dressing room," said his mother tenderly, "and then we will discuss the contents of the letter at our ease—now, if we left the circle, it would break on the enjoyment of the party."

And Roland, how gracefully and gaily he danced with his young cousins that evening, and fondly his mother watched his happy movements.

At a late hour the party separated, and

Roland went with his mother to her dressing-room—Lord Archgolle's letter was read over and over again, and no fault could the fond mother find with it.—A very sincere attachment had been formed between young Roland Percie and Lord Archgolle's only child, the Lady Josephine Spencer; the father had tried to foster its growth, it was an alliance he fondly wished for—and the mother could not cast a shade of sorrow on her son's love-dream. And now there was Lord Archgolle's full and delighted concurrence in all Roland's wishes.

"My own, beloved son," said Charlotte, embracing him fondly—"for twenty one years you have made your mother's happiness—in sickness and in health you have alike been my joy and comfort, and now your happy marriage will fill up the measure of my wishes for you—you are young it is true, and so is Lady Josephine."

"But," interrupted Roland, "you must live with us, dear, dear mother, and guide us

during our youth, and be our stay—our safeguard—my happiness would be very incomplete without you to witness it. I don't forget, my beloved mother, all your care of me since my childhood—I am not ungrateful, and, were I not sure Josephine will love you as tenderly as I do, she should not be my wife.—Don't fear to meet Lord Archgolle," continued the young man, "he is resolved to live abroad after our marriage."

"I will not leave you, my son," said his mother, moved by his affection. "And if your wife prove every thing I wish her, then I will go rejoicing to my grave.—Dearest Roland, you know how much my parents loved me—how completely I was indulged during both my childhood and girlhood—I eloped with your father—I married him without a parent's blessing—I forgot my duty as a child—but my fault has been fully punished.—Good night now, my son—it is late—dream sweetly of the bright days before you, and

may you have all the enjoyment that a happy marriage can bring, and with many a blessing will your mother welcome your wife—for too well she can tell all the miseries that may spring from an ELOPEMENT !”

My tale is ended—it is unnecessary to point the moral ; but, my young readers will I hope discover, and reflect on it.

THE END.







